

**FOCUS**  
Ireland



# Camino De Santiago

## The French Way

Sarria to Santiago

May 27 – June 3 2024

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# FOCUS

Ireland

## Join the spirit of the Camino

**The Camino de Santiago, or the Way of St James, is a network of pilgrims' paths in France, Portugal and Spain that lead to the historic city of Santiago de Compostela.**

**Each year, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims make their way to Santiago, where tradition has it the remains of the apostle St James are buried. While many choose to undertake the Camino for religious reasons, the majority consider the experience a spiritual adventure, or a retreat of sorts. So, why should you do the Camino de Santiago with Focus Ireland?**

### **Our Experience**

Focus Ireland has successfully run several overseas challenges in the past, and many of our participants have come back to do a second and third year of fundraising and travelling with us. We want to make 2024 our most successful trip and with your help we can provide services to more people who need them. By signing up for this challenge, you're helping make it possible for families in Ireland to avail of the services that they so urgently need.



### **Broaden Your Horizons**

This is not just a physical challenge – you will also have the opportunity to experience a totally different culture. The Camino path meanders through beautiful landscapes in rural Spain, a region that has remained very authentic. As you pass through tiny Galician villages, you will meet the locals who always offer a warm welcome to the walkers who come through. The food in this region is very different to what you would expect from Spanish cuisine. Many think that Spanish food is a lot of paella and tapas, but this culinary sojourn will provide you with plenty of surprises!



### **Meet New People**

The people who sign up to the Camino come from entirely different backgrounds, and are from all over the country. Some people do it in pairs but many sign up on their own for the chance to meet new people.

# Camino de Santiago

The French Way: Sarria-Santiago de Compostela

This fully guided trek will bring the group along 115km of the French Way starting in the town of Sarria and walking to the historic city of Santiago.

The seven night trip will include five walking days of varying distances and elevation. You will be walking approximately five to seven hours each day, but don't worry; there are plenty of stops along the way for you to enjoy a break and take in the views.

The trail consists of walking paths and mountain trails, but nothing too difficult.

Previous experience is not necessary, however, participants must have an average level of fitness and be over the age of 16.



## Itinerary

**Day 1 – Arrive Santiago and bus transfer to Sarria**

**Day 2: Pilgrims walk to Portomarin (21km)**

**Day 3: Portomatin to Palas de Rei (25km)**

**Day 4: Palas de Rei to Arzua (29km)**

**Day 5: Arzua to Rua (18km)**

**Day 6: Rua to Santiago (21km)**

**Day 7: Free Day in Santiago to get pilgrims cert and explore the city**



**Sarria**

Portomarin

Palas de Rei

Arzua

Rua

**Santiago de Compostela**



In Ireland at the moment there are over 13,500 people experiencing homelessness.

### **Together Every Step of the Way**

We organise a series of meetings in advance of the trip where we run through all the important details with you. This will also give you the chance to meet the other participants who have signed up.

You will be given a fundraising pack with tips on how to fundraise for your trip. We will provide you with any letters you may need, t-shirts, collection buckets, posters and other materials to advertise your events.

We are always available if you have any questions or need help fundraising. We will do everything we can to make sure you reach your target.

You will also be given information on the travel guidelines you need to be aware of, including how much money to bring, safety tips, electrical adapters, telephones, a brief description of the area's history and geography, local customs and more. We will be able to answer any questions you may have about the trip.



# **FOCUS Ireland**

**You will help to challenge homelessness and change lives.**

In Ireland at the moment there are over 13,500 people experiencing homelessness, with 1 in every 3 in emergency accommodation being a child.

Some are sleeping rough, some in emergency shelters or special 'B&Bs'. Some may be couch-surfing from house to house - anywhere they can put their head down for the night.

What they all have in common is that they have no safe, secure or stable place to call home. They might have a bed for the night, but no kitchen to make a cup of tea, nowhere to rest during the day, nowhere they can close their own front door and call home.

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We have put together a list of FAQs to help you learn more about the Camino. If you have any questions about or would like further information please call Monica on 087 954 7007 .

### What is the French Way?

This fully guided trek will bring the group along a 115km of the French Way, starting in the town of Sarria and walking to Santiago de Compostela. The trail types consist of walking paths, mountain trails and coastal ways, but nothing too difficult.

### What can I expect?

The trip is fully guided by locals who are very knowledgeable about the culture, history and flora and fauna of the area. You don't have to stay with your guide, and the way is clearly marked, so you are free to go at your own pace. However, you are part of a group so there is some expectation to regroup at lunch stops.

If you're after a five-star holiday, forget this challenge. If, however, you are over 16, relatively active, and seeking an experience that is completely different, fun and worthwhile, then this challenge is for you!

### How much do I have to fundraise?

Accepting the physical challenge is just the beginning. The minimum level of sponsorship is €2,900. In order to help you achieve this target, we will send you a starter pack upon receipt of registration which will include materials to help you with your fundraising.

### When is the fundraising total due?

Ideally total fundraising should be completed 4 weeks prior to the trip. This allows for Focus Ireland to pay all suppliers

### How much of my money goes directly to Focus Ireland?

€1,000 of your money raised will go directly to support Focus Ireland services. The remainder will cover the costs of your trip.

### Do I need to pay a deposit?

Yes there is a €250 non-refundable deposit required to secure your place.

### What's included in the Trip?

- Return flights from Dublin to Santiago
- 7 nights' accommodation
- Half board (including celebratory dinner on the final night)
- Walking guides
- All transfers to and from the airport in Spain
- Luggage transfer while you walk
- Camino Passport and official certificate

### What will Focus Ireland do to help me Fundraise?

Fundraising can be a challenge but we will support you every step of the way. When you first sign up we will help you design a fundraising programme that works for you. We organise a series of meetings in advance of the trip where we run through all the details you need to know and so you can meet the other participants who have signed up.

We will send you a startup pack upon receipt of registration which will include materials to help you with your fundraising.

All money should be sent directly to the charity as and when you collect it. Cheques should always be made payable to Focus Ireland.

### How do I convince sponsors that it's not a holiday?

This challenge couldn't possibly be considered a holiday. You will need to spend months training and fundraising, before undertaking a demanding physical challenge. All three of these elements take time, effort and commitment. You will be training for many months to get fit, raising thousands of euros for charity, and then undertaking a physically demanding challenge. In addition, as this is a pilgrimage, you should be aware that while the accommodation is comfortable, it will not be luxurious. The meals will be nice, substantial dishes using locally sourced ingredients, but they will not be extravagant by any means!

### How fit do I need to be?

This route can be completed by anyone of an average fitness. However, everyone is encouraged to develop a training programme of their own as you will need to build up your stamina and feel like a confident walker before you depart. We will also be arranging a free preparation walk so you can be ready for the trek.

The very nature of the trip means a certain level of fitness is required. This challenge is designed to be demanding, as you need to earn your sponsorship money, so getting fit is part of the challenge. We recommend you spend three to four months before your trip getting fit and building up stamina. The more you prepare the more you will enjoy the challenge.

### What's the weather usually like at this time of year?

May is a great time of year to visit northern Spain with temperatures averaging at a max 18° (low 12°) at this time of year.

### How many people will be in my group?

We are organising the trip based on 20 participants - places are limited and are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

### Is there an age limit?

To take part in the Camino Trek you must be over 18 years of age (or if under 18 you must travel with a parent or guardian who is over the age of 25) but that is where the age limit stops.

### What do I need to bring?

We will give you a Camino Pack which includes details of what you need to bring with you and what to leave behind.

### How do I register?

Once you have decided to take up the challenge, you will need to fill out a booking form. To get a booking form please contact Monica at [monica.mcelhinney@focusireland.ie](mailto:monica.mcelhinney@focusireland.ie) or 087 954 7007

Please return the booking form with your deposit, copy of your passport and health insurance details.

When you complete a booking form, you will provide us with a certain amount of personal data, which we will only process for the purposes of administration. Examples of this processing include (but are not limited to): your name, occupation, date of birth and passport number which is required for us to book flights and for hotel reservations overseas. Any dietary requirements, allergies, or medical conditions are used for informing the airline, ground handler and tour leader where necessary.

**Sr Stan: "Everything has a time, our time is now. To live our lives every minute, every hour, every day, every year. Now is the time to live the lives we have been gifted with."**



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**REGISTER NOW**

