



Santiago de Compostela & Galicia

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Best Places to Stay

- Casa de Trillo (p513)
- Hotel Herbeira (p521)
- Parador de Santo Estevo (p540)
- Hotel Mar da Ardora (p512)
- Casa do Castelo de Andrade (p520)

Best Scenery

- Cabo Fisterra (p511)
- Illas Cíes (p533)
- Cabo Ortegal (p522)
- Monte de Santa Trega (p534)
- Cañón do Sil (p538)

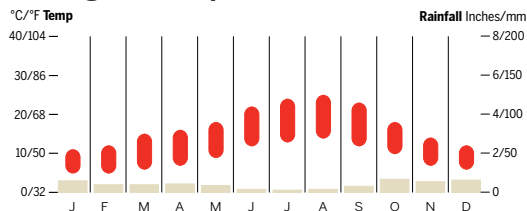
Why Go?

Santiago de Compostela, goal of 200,000 people who set out every year on the storied Camino de Santiago pilgrim trail, is one of Spain's most beautiful and magical cities, and an exceptionally good reason for any traveller, pilgrim or not, to make their way to Spain's northwestern corner.

But Galicia, a unique region with its own language and distinctive culture, is much more than Santiago. The wild coastline is frayed up and down its 1200km length by majestic *rías* (inlets), and strung with cliffs, beaches, islands, and fishing ports that bring in indisputably the best seafood in Spain. Then there's the interior, a labyrinth of deep-green valleys and hills, speckled with stone-built villages, aged monasteries, vineyards and farms that put top-quality meat on Galician tables. Nor is Santiago Galicia's only exciting city: A Coruña, Vigo and Lugo are all contemporary cultural hubs with heady nocturnal scenes.

When to Go

Santiago de Compostela



Jun & Sep No peak-season crowds or prices but (hopefully) decent weather.

Jul Dance a jig at the Festival Ortigueira, Spain's biggest Celtic music festival.

24 Jul Spectacular fireworks launch Santiago de Compostela's celebration of the Día de Santiago.

HIT THE ROOF

Following the success of Santiago de Compostela's exciting cathedral-rooftop visits (p505), Lugo (p541) and Tui (p535) cathedrals are following suit. These visits don't just give you fine city panoramas but also unique angles on the cathedrals' interiors.

Top Day Walks

- ➔ Ruta del Litoral (p514)
- ➔ Camelle-Laxe (p513)
- ➔ Ruta Monte Faro (p533)
- ➔ Camiño Real (p538)
- ➔ Mosteiro de Caaveiro walk (p521)

Bring Your Umbrella

Swept by one rainy front after another from the Atlantic, Galicia has, overall, twice as much rain as the Spanish national average. June to August are the least rainy months.

Best Beaches

- ➔ Praia das Rodas (p533)
- ➔ Praia da Mar de Fora (p512)
- ➔ Praia As Catedrais (p523)
- ➔ Praia do Picón (p522)
- ➔ Praia da Barra (p531)

Living the History of the Camino

Travellers from all over Europe have been beating paths to Santiago de Compostela ever since the discovery of what were accredited as the Apostle James' remains there 12 centuries ago. In few cities is the aura of past centuries so intense. Santiago's magnificent cathedral, its monasteries and churches and its ancient stone-paved streets are thick with reminders that the city has been the goal of millions of pilgrims over 1200 years. The sense of millenarian tradition is even stronger when travelling the Camino de Santiago itself, strung with time-honoured landmarks, inns, churches and monuments by which pilgrims have always measured their progress.

The Camino de Santiago is not just one Camino. About 70% of people arrive by the Camino Francés (French Route), which starts in the Pyrenees. But many also reach Santiago by other traditional routes, from A Coruña, Portugal, Cantabria, Asturias or Andalucía. All over Galicia you will encounter the blue signs with a yellow scallop-shell emblem that tell you you're on one of the many Caminos de Santiago.

ITINERARIES**One Week**

Santiago de Compostela is Galicia's number-one destination and will keep you happy for at least two days. Then travel round the beautiful Costa da Morte to A Coruña and, if time allows, on round the spectacular Rías Altas.

Two Weeks

Add parts of the Rías Baixas and their islands, plus inland Lugo, Ourense or the Ribeira Sacra, to the one-week itinerary.

Top Five Food Experiences

- ➔ **Mercado de Abastos** (p508) Santiago de Compostela's fascinating food market is piled with fine produce from Galicia's seas and countryside, and there are lively eateries and bars right on the spot.
- ➔ **Albariño and seafood at Cambados** (p525) Galicia's best-known white wine goes down perfectly with a plate of cockles, mussels or scallops in the taverns of albariño's 'capital', Cambados.
- ➔ **Pulpo á feira** Galicia's iconic octopus dish: tender slices of tentacle with olive oil and paprika, delicious everywhere.
- ➔ **Eirado da Leña** (p529) This cute little Pontevedra restaurant serves up the best of creative contemporary Galician cuisine, and with a smile.
- ➔ **Rúa Pescadería** (p532) Buy oysters from the shuckers in this Vigo street and enjoy them with a glass of wine at neighbouring bars.