

## Camino de Santiago - the Northern Way, Spain

Walk the final stage of the Camino de Santiago to reach the great pilgrims' city of Santiago de Compostela.



### Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

### Holiday overview

Style	Trek
Accommodation	Hotels and Pensions
Grade	Gentle / Moderate
Duration	9 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On trek: 7 days
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local Leader Camino Del Norte
Land only	Joining in Santiago De Compostela, Spain

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



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# Departures

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## Group departures

### 2024 Dates:

Sun 07 Apr - Mon 15 Apr

Sun 11 Aug - Mon 19 Aug

Sun 08 Sep - Mon 16 Sep

### Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

### Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

### No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

### Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

### Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

### Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website.

# Your guide

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Our Camino de Santiago holiday is led by professional Spanish guides who speak excellent English and who are very knowledgeable about the local history, flora and fauna.

Guides may include Íñigo Ayllón, a professional mountain guide who holds degrees in Law and Mountain Sports. He dedicates his time to his passion, the mountains, working as a guide and as a legal adviser for activities in the natural environment. He is from Aragon and he speaks Spanish and English.



## Your trip highlights

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- Experience the peace and picturesque scenery of the Camino del Norte through rural northern Spain
- Arrive at Santiago de Compostela - the satisfying culmination of 7 days and 160 km of walking
- Receive a 'Pilgrim's Passport' at the start of the trek, and gain your 'Compostela certificate' when you complete your pilgrimage
- Visit the magnificent Santa Maria de Sobrado Monastery and the Romanesque cathedral at Mondonedo
- Stay at the exquisite Pazo Santa Maria country house and the stylish Parador de Vilalba

## At a glance itinerary

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Day 1	Fly to Santiago. Group transfer to Ribadeo.
Days 2-4	Walk to Vilalba via overnight stops at Lourenza and Abadin.
Days 5-6	Walk from Vilalba to A Roxica. Visit the monastery of Sobrado des Monxes. Drive to Aruza.
Days 7-8	Walk to O Pedrouzo and on to Santiago. Arrive at Santiago de Compostela.
Day 9	Group transfer to Santiago airport. Fly to London.

## Trip summary

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We welcome you on this fine modern day pilgrimage on the Camino del Norte (the Northern Way), the final stretch of the famous Camino de Santiago - also known as the Way of St James. This delightful trek shows the best that the region of Galicia in northern Spain has to offer. The Camino del Norte is one of several pilgrimage routes to Santiago and has the benefit of being more peaceful than the well-trodden Camino de Frances, but still has good facilities and is a varied and interesting trek. In fact the two routes join together at Arzuza so you can enjoy both the tranquillity of the Northern Way and the camaraderie of the French way.

The entire Camino del Norte is 817 km long and runs all the way from Irun on the French border, to Santiago. We take the week long, 160 km final stage into Santiago - with the famous Santiago de Compostela as your goal. This final stretch of the Camino turns away from the coast at Ribadeo and you can begin to experience rural northern Spain. You pass through farmland with pleasant rolling hills and lush greenery, and see many horreos where farmers store their corn. You trek through stylish towns with pleasant cafes and restaurants, quaint villages, medieval monasteries and impressive cathedrals. There is ample time for exploration and also to relax with a café con leche or cerveza in one of Galicia's many cafes and bars.

Your trip will be led by an enthusiastic, English-speaking Spanish guide, and all your luggage will be transported by vehicle each day so you only need to walk with a very light day sack.

As your journey progresses you will get a sense of what life was like for the early pilgrims and, on reaching the ancient cathedral in the heart of Santiago, you will also have a deep sense of achievement. The cathedral houses the relics of St James and was one of three major centres of Catholic pilgrimage in medieval times. Many thousands of people from all over the world still make the same journey today although not always for spiritual reasons. Superb walking, wonderful scenery and a good physical challenge are among the motivations for many modern day pilgrims.

Unlike the original pilgrims, you will enjoy a great deal of comfort on your trek as we have selected the best hotels or pensions for your overnight stops. Two particular gems are the fabulous Parador de Vilalba - an extension of the landmark Torre dos Andrade - and the exquisite country house hotel near Arzuza. Set in a stunning rural location it has beautifully decorated rooms and a cosy dining room with a roaring, open fire. And, even in the more simple pensions you can be assured of a warm welcome and comfortable bed.

Having successfully completed the last 100 km of the Camino de Santiago you will be entitled to receive a 'Compostela Certificate' - a unique souvenir and testament to your unforgettable journey.

## Special notes

### Flight arrangements

We don't offer flights inclusive arrangements for this trip as the cheapest and most convenient flights are via low cost airlines such as Ryanair and Vueling. These are best booked by clients directly with the airline once we have confirmed that the trip is guaranteed to run. Please do not purchase flights before we have confirmed the trip status. Our Flights Manager will be happy to advise if you have any queries.

### Compostela Certificate

Pilgrims or travellers who successfully walk at least the last 100 km of the Santiago de Compostela are entitled to claim a 'Compostela' or Certificate of Completion. To prove that you have genuinely completed your 100 km you need to collect at least two stamps each day on a 'Pilgrim's Passport' as you progress. You will receive the Pilgrim's Passport when you meet your guide who will explain how it works and make sure you get your passport stamped each day as you pass through small towns and villages. On arrival at Santiago de Compostela your guide will also help you claim your certificate from the Pilgrim's Office.

# Your trip itinerary

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## Day 1: Fly London to Santiago

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On arrival at Santiago airport there will be a single transfer to Ribadeo to coincide with the timings of the majority of the group.

Ribadeo is a pretty harbourside town set on the river that divides Galicia from Asturias. It has an attractive old town and a celebrated beach nearby where rocks form natural arches thought to resemble cathedrals.

**Overnight: Hotel Casona de Lazurtegui or Similar (Meals: D)**

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## Day 2: Trek from Ribadeo to Lourenza - 27.5 km, 6-7 hours.

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You begin your holiday hiking away from the coast. After walking through the town of Ribadeo, you head off on a rising forest trail. Most of the way to Lourenza is off road on very quiet farm tracks. You pass through the ever present eucalyptus trees and later, native trees. You may be lucky and spot hoopoes here. The countryside is very pleasant as you pass through farmland with rolling hills in the distance. Interestingly, the Camino waymarks are read oppositely to those in Asturias (the previous district). The direction of the route is indicated by the lines of the scallop that diverge.



You pass through Vallamartin Pequeno and Villamartin Grande, Gondan and San Xusto, the latter two having albergue de peregrinos (pilgrims' hostels). Lourenza is home to a 10th century Benedictine Monasterio de San Salvador. It has an impressive Baroque façade and contains a museum of religious art. It is also famous for its 'fabas' - local beans.

You overnight in Pension Casa Gloria. As there is no restaurant in the pension, you'll dine out at a local restaurant.

**Overnight: Pension Casa Gloria or Similar (Meals: BLD)**

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## Day 3: Trek from Lourenza to Abadin - 24.5 km, 5-6 hours.

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You head into the hills today with lovely views of the surrounding countryside. It is about an 8.5 km walk into Mondonedo, which was once one of the seven capitals of the Galicia kingdom. Mondonedo is a lovely town with pleasant bars and cafes around the cathedral square. The Romanesque cathedral is a national monument, and it's worth sitting in one of the cafés opposite to admire its impressive facade. You walk uphill out of Mondonedo, and weave your way upwards past the villages of Barbeitas, Maariz, Paadin, San Vincenzo and Lousada before descending into Gontan.

You continue to walk on a mixture of forest trails, farm tracks and quiet secondary roads, walking up to a pass. After the pass it's about 3 km to Abadin where you will spend the night. Abadin, the capital of the Concello, has a food store, pharmacy and some bars and restaurants.

**Overnight: Pension Casa Goas or Similar (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 4: Trek from Abadin to Vilalba - 19 km, 4-5 hours.**

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After walking through the town of Abadin, you continue on quiet roads for approximately 2.5 km and cross the River Adadin. You pass through the villages of Ponterroxal and Martinan. About 14 km from Abadin you pass through Goiriz which has a hostel, bar and restaurant. You later pass As Casonvas and A Casilla. Your walk today is on a mixture of forest trails, quiet rural roads and farm tracks, passing many farms - a perfect insight into life in rural Northern Spain. It's a pretty quiet, peaceful walk, just passing the occasional villager, farmer and pilgrim. For the next two nights you'll stay in the very impressive, Parador de Vilalba Hotel - a wonderful, 4 star hotel that is an extension of the landmark Torre dos Andrade. The hotel restaurant serves excellent food, their puddings are particularly delicious, and with all that walking, you'll have earned the indulgence.



**Overnight: Parador de Vilalba (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 5: Trek from Vilalba to Baamonde - 21 km, 4½-5½ hours.**

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A lovely walk today through the heart of the Terra Cha region of Galicia that is famed for its dairy produce - particularly its cheeses. Terra Cha means 'flatlands' and indeed your walk today has few undulations. It is also a good area for birdwatching and on the 2017 recce of this route, we saw hoopoe, black woodpeckers, white storks and chiffchaffs - your guide will help you spot and identify any birds or wildlife you encounter. After about 4 km of your walk you pass through the sleepy villages of Gabin and then As Turbelas. Shortly after you come to San Xoan de Alba (just over 6 km from Vilalba) where you'll find a medieval church. After the church you follow the Camino signs on a mixture of paved roads, dirt tracks and footpaths until you reach Saa which has a medieval bridge over the Labrada. Minor roads and dirt tracks take you through the villages of Penas, Contariz, Casanovas and Ferreira before you arrive at Baamonde. Baamonde contains the 14th century Church of Santiago, and also the museum (former home) of sculptor Victor Corral. From here you will be driven back to your hotel at Vilalba.

**Overnight: Parador de Vilalba (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 6: Trek from Baamonde to A Roxica - 25km, 4½-5½ hours. Drive to Sobrado dos Monxes to see the monastery and on to Arzua.**

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You return to Baamonde to start the next stage of the Camino. After crossing the River Parga, you pass the 14th century Chapel of San Alberte. This is a very pleasant stretch for 5 km or so with gorse bushes, scrubland and a wide track with stone walls, before emerging onto paved roads through farmland countryside. The walk to Miraz from Baamonde is about 14 km long. Miraz has a bar and a couple of pilgrims' hostels. En route you pass through the villages of San Alberte, Toar, Bandoncel, Diga, Raposeira, Aldar and Seixon which has a bar and 12th century church.

From Miraz you continue for approximately 6 km, with a pleasant uphill, off-road section. As the route from A Roxica to Sobrado dos Monxes is all on tarmac, a vehicle transfer will take you to the monastery (25 km drive) and then onto Arzua where you'll stop for the night. The Santa Maria de Sobrado Cistercian Monastery, with its splendid Baroque frontage, has its origins in the 10th century as a twin family monastery and convent belonging to the family of Count Hermenegildo. It became a Cistercian Monastery in 1142. The way of life of the Cistercian monk is simple and austere, lived in an atmosphere of silence and separation from the world.

Arzua is a market town and houses a church containing a 19th century medallion depicting Santiago's intervention in Clavijo. It's also famous for its delicious cheese! Tonight you'll stay at the Pazo Santa Maria, a renovated nobleman's house, oozing character and charm.

**Overnight: Pazo Santa Maria, Arzua (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 7: Trek from Arzua to O Pedrouzo - 19 km, 4-5 hours.**

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Today, the Camino del Norte joins the other great pilgrimage route to Santiago - the Camino de Frances. This is a far busier trail so you will now be walking with more pilgrims; heightening the sense of expectation and giving a feeling of companionship as you trek together towards your final destination.

The walk to O Pedrouzo takes you through small hamlets and forests, passing A Calzada, A Calle and Salceda. If you're feeling thirsty, A Brea, about 13 km from Arzua, has some bars. You proceed on paved roads, following the Camino signs through Santa Irene, which has a couple of pilgrims' hostels, and Rua, before reaching O Pedrouzo. O Pedrouzo is a pleasant town with quite a few bars and restaurants. You'll dine out in one of the restaurants this evening.

**Overnight: Pension Lo, O Pedrouzo or Similar (Meals: BLD)**

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### **Day 8: Trek from O Pedrouzo to Santiago de Compostela - 20 km, 4½-5½ hours.**

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Well this it is - the finale to your pilgrimage on the Camino del Norte. After just over a kilometre of walking outside of the town of O Pedrouzo, you can enjoy the last stretch of off-road hiking, on a footpath through forest with stone bridges and streams. It's mainly flat today, so not too taxing. You will doubtless feel a great sense of anticipation as you head towards your final goal alongside other pilgrims following their own quest. After about 8 km of walking you reach Labacolla, where pilgrims used to wash themselves in the river before arriving in Santiago. A further 8 km brings you to famed Monte de Gozo where you may get your first distant glimpse of the towers of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.



It takes a while from the busy streets leading into Santiago to reach the Cathedral. It is well worth the wait though as you approach it on quaint, narrow, cobbled lanes with lovely boutique shops, and plenty of restaurants and cafes. Following in the footsteps of hundreds of thousands of pilgrims through the ages, you make your way to Plaza del Obradoiro which is dominated by the Gothic façade of the Romanesque cathedral that houses the remains of St James the Great. Here, at the Cathedral's steps, you reach the culmination of your journey.

Having successfully completed your pilgrimage, you can now claim your Compostela Certificate from the Pilgrim's Office which your guide will help you with.

**Overnight: Hotel Rua Villar or Capitol Hotel, Santiago (Meals: BLD)**

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### **Day 9: Transfer to Santiago airport. Fly back to London.**

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After breakfast there will be a single transfer to Santiago airport which is timed to fit the group flight. Please check with the office for details. (Meals: B)

## **Our grading system**

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Camino de Santiago - the Northern Way is graded as a Gentle/Moderate walking holiday, as described below.

### **Gentle**

Trips within this grade typically mix sightseeing with easy-paced half and/or full day walks. On these trips, walks will be on relatively low altitude trails, for a duration of around 4-6 hours. On all of our Gentle graded trips, some ascent and descent should be anticipated, and there may occasionally be a longer walking day. Holidays within this grade generally use hotels and comfortable lodges although a few do have some nights camping.

These holidays are suitable for people who enjoy easy-paced walks in the British countryside or exploring on foot rather than in a vehicle.

### **Moderate**

Holidays in this grade typically involve 5 to 10 days of walking or trekking. They will often venture into more remote country and can cross mountain passes. Altitudes though are still relatively low, going no higher than around 4,300m/14,000ft. Accommodation can include simple hotels, tea houses, lodges and camping.

## What the price includes

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**Mountain Kingdoms** aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

### What's included:

- ✓ English-speaking Spanish guide
- ✓ Hotel/pension accommodation as described
- ✓ All meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 9
- ✓ A Pilgrim's Passport
- ✓ Your luggage transported each day by vehicle
- ✓ Vehicle support in case of injury, illness, etc.
- ✓ Road transfers by private vehicle
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK (flight inclusive option). If you are travelling land only, check with our office for joining time at the airport.
- ✓ Single, timed, group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)

### Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

### What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Tips
- ✗ Drinks

### Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit [For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>](https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign).



## Your accommodation

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We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



### Hotel Casona de Lazurtegui or Similar

This hotel is situated in a nice, quiet location but is within a few minutes' walk to the shops and restaurants of Ribadeo. It offers: friendly, helpful service; spacious, clean and comfortable rooms; pleasant, tasteful décor; and a good buffet breakfast.



### Pension Casa Gloria or Similar

This pension in Lourenza has clean, comfortable rooms and is in a nice quiet location. The owners are bakers so make pastries which will be on the breakfast buffet, taken in the kitchen.



### Pension Casa Goas or Similar

This pension in Abadin is a family business which started in 1944. It offers a coffee bar and restaurant serving nice, home-cooked food, and the rooms are simple, clean and comfortable.



### Parador de Vilalba

This smart, elegant, 4 star hotel is a real gem. It is located at the Torre dos Andrade, a landmark medieval tower in Vilalba. Guest rooms are situated in an attractive stone building alongside the tower, built in the traditional Galician style, along with a bar and wellness centre. The hotel also has an excellent restaurant serving local specialities. The rooms are spacious with many toiletries, minibar and free Wi-Fi.



### Pazo Santa Maria, Arzua

This is an exquisite country house hotel set in stunning countryside with beautiful views, on the outskirts of Arzua. It is beautifully and tastefully decorated throughout. It was built in 1700s for country noblemen, and has been lovingly renovated/converted into this gorgeous hotel. There are 17 rooms, all slightly different. They have a spa, a cosy dining room with a big open fireplace and lovely gardens. The service and food are both excellent.



### Pension Lo, O Pedrouzo or Similar

This is fairly new, clean, comfortable pension, with en-suite bathrooms, free Wi-Fi and buffet breakfast.



### Hotel Rua Villar or Capitol Hotel, Santiago

In Santiago we use either the Rua Villar or the Capitol Hotel. The Rua Villar is a good quality, 3 star hotel situated in the historic centre of Santiago close to the cathedral. A converted 18th century house it has lots of character yet rooms have all modern facilities including fridge/mini bar, air-conditioning and free Wi-Fi. Alternatively we use the Capitol Hotel which is also just a few minutes walk from the cathedral. A stylish, 3\* boutique hotel, the rooms at the Capitol offer the same level of amenities as the Rua Villar. Neither hotel has a restaurant, so you will dine out on your last night in Santiago.

## Meal arrangements

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8 breakfasts, 7 lunches and 8 dinners are included

## Flight arrangements

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### Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

### Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

## Further information

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When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

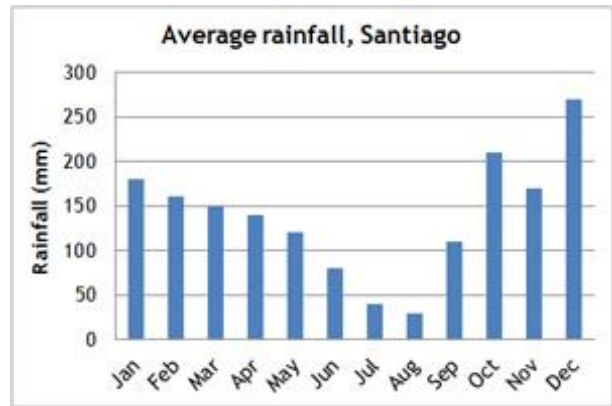
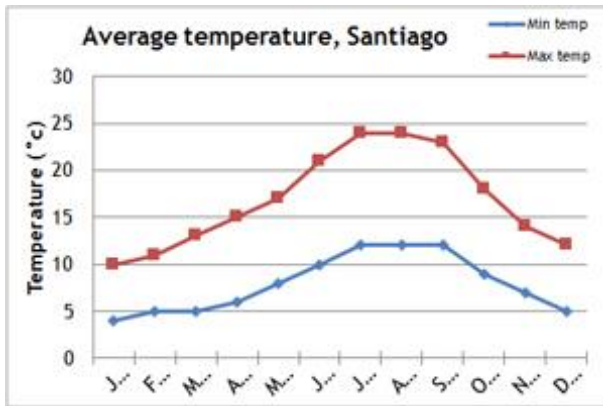
## The nature of adventure travel

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Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

# Climate information

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## Extensions

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### Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).



### Additional time in Santiago

If you would like to extend your holiday we could book extra hotel nights in Santiago for you. We can also help you arrange a personal sightseeing tour or other interesting activities. In fact, whatever's available we can help make it happen. We're happy to suggest ideas, provide quotes and make all the arrangements.

We can also assist with flight and hotel upgrades.

## Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

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- Your trek will be led by a professional, English-speaking guide who will be delighted to share their expert knowledge of the history, culture and nature of their home country.
- Your guide will provide you with a Pilgrim's Passport and help you claim your Compostela Certificate at the end of the trek in Santiago.
- We include all meals from arrival to departure.
- We have vehicle support throughout the trip so your luggage is transported each day - meaning you only need to walk with a light day sack.
- We use the best pensions or hotels available on the trail including the stunning Pazo Santa Maria country house hotel in Arzua and the atmospheric 4 Parador de Vilalba.
- In Santiago we use a good standard hotel situated in the historic old town, close to the Cathedral.
- The trek is run at a relaxed pace where you'll have plenty of opportunity to look at the views, birdwatch, explore or simply sip café con leche at local bars.
- A fixed group transfer to/from the airport is included at the start and end of the trip.
- Niki Morgan researched this walking holiday in 2017, so if you want to talk to someone in the office with first-hand experience of the route, call Niki on 01453 844400.
- Our maximum group size is 12 for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group travel experience and helps reduce the negative aspects often associated with larger trekking groups.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights team for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com) or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.



## What our clients say

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*A wonderful trip. Everything was well organised: the pre-trip information, the flexibility of booking extra days before and after the walk, and our excellent guide who took care of everything whilst we were in Spain. This was much more than a walking holiday - it was a shared experience which we started walking with strangers and ended with friends.*

*-J Hughes, Shropshire*



*Fantastic company. Well organised and a great guide. Didn't need to worry about a thing except my walking gear and keeping up my energy!*

*-D Heaton*

*A beautiful route through rural northern Spain, the Northern Way has everything: wonderful scenery, fantastic food, great places to stay, friendly locals and an interesting history. This route offers an insight into the rural existence here, that insight being enhanced by our knowledgeable guide. It is worth taking an extra day or two in Santiago either at the outset, as we did, or at the end, taking time to explore the old town area.*

*-Mr & Mrs T, England*



*The accommodation was just excellent, a good variety but all of a high standard. Whilst the historic buildings were more interesting, the modern hotels provided a good contrast, if anything enhancing the enjoyment of the more historic hotels. The food too was consistently good. Taking the two nights with a bit of luxury in the paradore worked well too...The whole itinerary was well thought out and most enjoyable. We are so pleased you offered the Northern Way, rather than its more famous counterpart.*

*- Mrs T, Nottinghamshire*

# Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

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## **Truly independent**

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

## **Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality**

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

## **Complete financial security**

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

## **No Surcharge Guarantee**

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

## **Award winning Responsible Tourism**

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).

## **Genuine small group travel**

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

## **Loyalty Discount**

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

## **Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier**

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

## **Comprehensive information**

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit [www.tourismdeclares.com](http://www.tourismdeclares.com)

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

### Carbon Offsetting

#### Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

#### Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

### Reducing Carbon Emissions

#### Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

#### Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.



