

Incredible Iberia

13 days

Itinerary downloaded on: December 8, 2023

Day 1: *Departure flight*

Day 2: *Arrive in Lisbon and transfer to Orem*

Visit Santarem, one of the oldest cities in the world. Walk through narrow streets to the Church of St. Stephen, containing the oldest recorded Eucharistic miracle, on continuous display since 1269 AD. Overnight near Fatima (possibly Pousada de Orem). Meal Plan: dinner

Day 3: *Fatima - Nazare*

Morning tour of Fatima; see the Basilica, the site of Francesco and Jacinta's graves, the Hamlet of Aljustrel, where the children lived, and Valinhos, the famous site of the Fourth Apparition of Our Lady of Fatima. Continue short distance to seaside village of Nazare and break for lunch. Visit the Chapel of Our Lady of Nazare on a cliff overlooking the ocean. Continue to the Monastery of Saint Mary of Alcobaha, one of Portugal's most impressive religious monuments. Overnight in Braga. Meal Plan: breakfast and dinner

Day 4: *Braga*

Tour Braga, not only the oldest city in the country but also Portugal's most religiously conservative. It's a great place to just wander at will and soak up the atmosphere. Afternoon free or possible excursion to Guimarães, birthplace of Portuguese nation. Overnight in Braga. Meal Plan: breakfast and dinner

Day 5: *Braga, Portugal - Tui*

Travel by road across the border into Spain and the small town of Tui (58 km), where, after visiting the church of San Bartolomeu de Rebordáns, we begin our breathtaking 16 km (4-hour) hike along La Ruta Portuguese pilgrimage route to Santiago. This route was used by Queen Isabel of Portugal (1271 -1336) to make at least one pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. From O Porrino continue by road to Santiago (109 km). Possible Santiago sightseeing on arrival. Overnight in Santiago de Compostela. Meal Plan: breakfast and dinner

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Day 6: *Santiago de Compostela*

Santiago is one of Spain's most beautiful cities, built of golden granite and declared a national monument in its entirety. It's a wonderful place to walk, with its arcades and flagstone streets, and we have the afternoon free to enjoy the town. We tour the highlights of Santiago and enjoy the colourful and exuberant Easter festivities, including the famous Mass. Time at leisure for independent exploration and to soak up the atmosphere. Santiago's cathedral is truly grand, adorned with many statues of St James in his familiar pilgrim guise with staff, broad-brimmed hat, and scallop-shell badge. The cathedral's highlight is the Portico de Gloria, with its striking Romanesque sculpture of a host of figures. Christ presides over the main door, flanked by his Apostles, and surrounded by 24 Elders of the Apocalypse playing music. Saint James sits on the central column beneath Christ. So many pilgrims have prayed at this spot with their fingers pressed in to the roots of the marble Tree of Jesse below Saint James that five deep holes have been worn into the marble. Overnight in Santiago de Compostela. Meal Plan: breakfast and dinner

Day 7: *Santiago - Lugo - Ponferadda - Leon*

Travel by road to Leon via Lugo, the only city in the world to be surrounded by completely intact Roman walls. The Cathedral, dedicated to St. Mary, was built about 1129, though the actual main facade and towers date only from 1769. This cathedral enjoys the privilege of having the Blessed Sacrament perpetually exposed, a fact commemorated in the armorial bearings of the town. Walk part of the walls before continuing to Astorga (possibly via Ponferadda to visit the castle), a fortified town whose churches, convents and hospitals take travellers back to the purest tradition of the Pilgrim's Road. Overnight in Leon. Meal Plan: breakfast and dinner

Day 8: *Leon: Bike Tour*

On a comfortable bike you will get to know the "must see" places but also places away from the typical tourist paths. The Leon bike tour is ideal for everyone who wants to get to know the city in a short time but in a relaxed way. The tour covers the city in 3 hours with stops every few minutes for the guide to provide commentaries. Time at leisure. Overnight in Leon. Meal Plan: breakfast and dinner

Day 9: *Leon - Picos de Europa*

Finish any outstanding Leon sightseeing, then drive into some of the most stunning scenery in all of Europe: the famed Picos de Europa. Straddling the Spanish regions of Asturias Cantabria and Leon, this mountain range is home to wild gorges, snow capped peaks, animals and many species of birds and flowers. Overnight in the Picos de Europa area. Meal Plan: breakfast and dinner

Day 10: *Picos de Europa*

The highlight today is the chance to walk on some of the continent's most beautiful mountain trails. There is something for everyone to do today. In the early morning will take a cable car up to the nearby peaks. From there we will have a full day to walk through this glorious scenery. Overnight in Picos area. Meal Plan: breakfast and dinner

Day 11: *Picos de Europa - Caves of Altamira - Bilbao*

Today we travel to Bilbao via the Caves at Altamira, famous for its Upper Paleolithic cave paintings featuring drawings and polychrome rock paintings of wild animals. Stops at villages along the sea (and possibly Santander) before arriving in Bilbao. Overnight in Bilbao. Meal Plan: breakfast and dinner

Day 12: *Bilbao*

Morning visit to famous Guggenheim Museum. Explore the Old Town of Bilbao on a walking tour. We travel back in time to mediaeval Bilbao with its cobbled streets, charming corners and squares, and trace its development through the centuries. Afternoon at leisure. Overnight in Bilbao area. Meal Plan: breakfast and dinner

Day 13: *Departure from Bilbao*