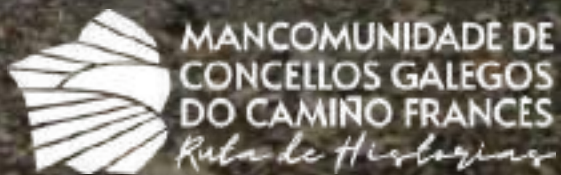


FRENCH WAY WALK WITH YOUR SENSES

Mancomunidad de Concellos Galegos do Camiño Francés




FRENCH WAY. WALK WITH YOUR SENSES

Mancomunidad de Concellos Galegos do Camiño Francés

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Feel the Way. Walk with your senses

This guide invites you to traverse the French Way of the Camino de Santiago in Galicia embracing the journey with an open heart and attuned senses, ready to uncover all the wonders it has to offer. Each step reveals a rich tapestry of landscapes, flavors, sounds and emotions, transforming your pilgrimage into a profound and unforgettable experience.

Feel the cool breeze against your skin, listen to the gentle murmur of the rivers and the soft whisper of the wind as it dances through ancient trees. Let your gaze wander across the lush meadows and majestic mountains. In every corner, uncover the cultural and spiritual wealth that permeates these lands. The French Way is more than a mere path; it is a life journey through the heart of Galicia, where every village, town, and hamlet extends a warm welcome inviting you to connect deeply with our history, our people and our land.

**Mancomunidade de Concellos
Galegos do Camiño Francés**

ABOUT US

The **Mancomunidad de Concellos Galegos do Camiño Francés** comprises the councils of **Pedrafita do Cebreiro, Triacastela, Samos, Sarria, Paradela, Portomarín, Monterroso, Palas de Rei, Melide, Arzúa, and O Pino.**

These eleven historic municipalities, united in their dedication to the preservation, protection, and promotion of the ancient Camino de Santiago, are traversed by the final stretch of the French Way in Galicia, extending approximately **160 kilometers** to the tomb of the Apostle in Santiago de Compostela.





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PEDRAFITA DO CEBREIRO

GATEWAY TO THE FRENCH WAY IN GALICIA

After a majestic and challenging ascent that will undoubtedly leave an indelible impression on your memory, your arrival in O Cebreiro, nestled between the sierras of O Courel and Os Ancares, marks the beginning of the French Camino as it enters **Galicia**. In this unique setting where time seems to have stood still, the enchanting village of O Cebreiro, with its serene atmosphere and breathtaking mountain views, will welcome you with the same warmth and hospitality that it has extended to every pilgrim for over a thousand years.





CHURCH OF SANTA MARÍA LA REAL

O Cebreiro is one of the most iconic and well-known places along the entire French Way, both for its strategic location and the deep symbolic tradition that surrounds it.



It was here, in the 1960s, where the Camino was revived once again, thanks to its great promoter and revitalizer, the priest **Elías Valiña**. He was the creator of the Camino's famous yellow arrow markers and played a key role in the preservation and restoration of O Cebreiro's important heritage, including the **Church of Santa María la Real** and the **Hospital of San Giraldo de Aurillac**, founded in the 9th century. Today, the Hospedería bearing the same name stands on the remains of the original hospital.

**The Church
of Santa María
A Real is a 9th
century pre-
Romanesque
gem.
Its miraculous
Chalice is
featured on the
coat of arms of
Galicia.**

An ancient historical tradition recounts that in the early 14th century, a monk was celebrating the Eucharist in the Church of Santa María A Real on a harsh winter day. Believing that no one would attend due to the snow and strong winds, he scoffed at the efforts of the only devoted farmer who came to witness merely “a little bread and wine.” To the priest’s astonishment, during the Consecration, the Host transformed into flesh and the Wine into blood. This miracle quickly spread throughout Europe, establishing O Cebreiro as a significant pilgrimage destination, safeguarded by kings and popes over the centuries.



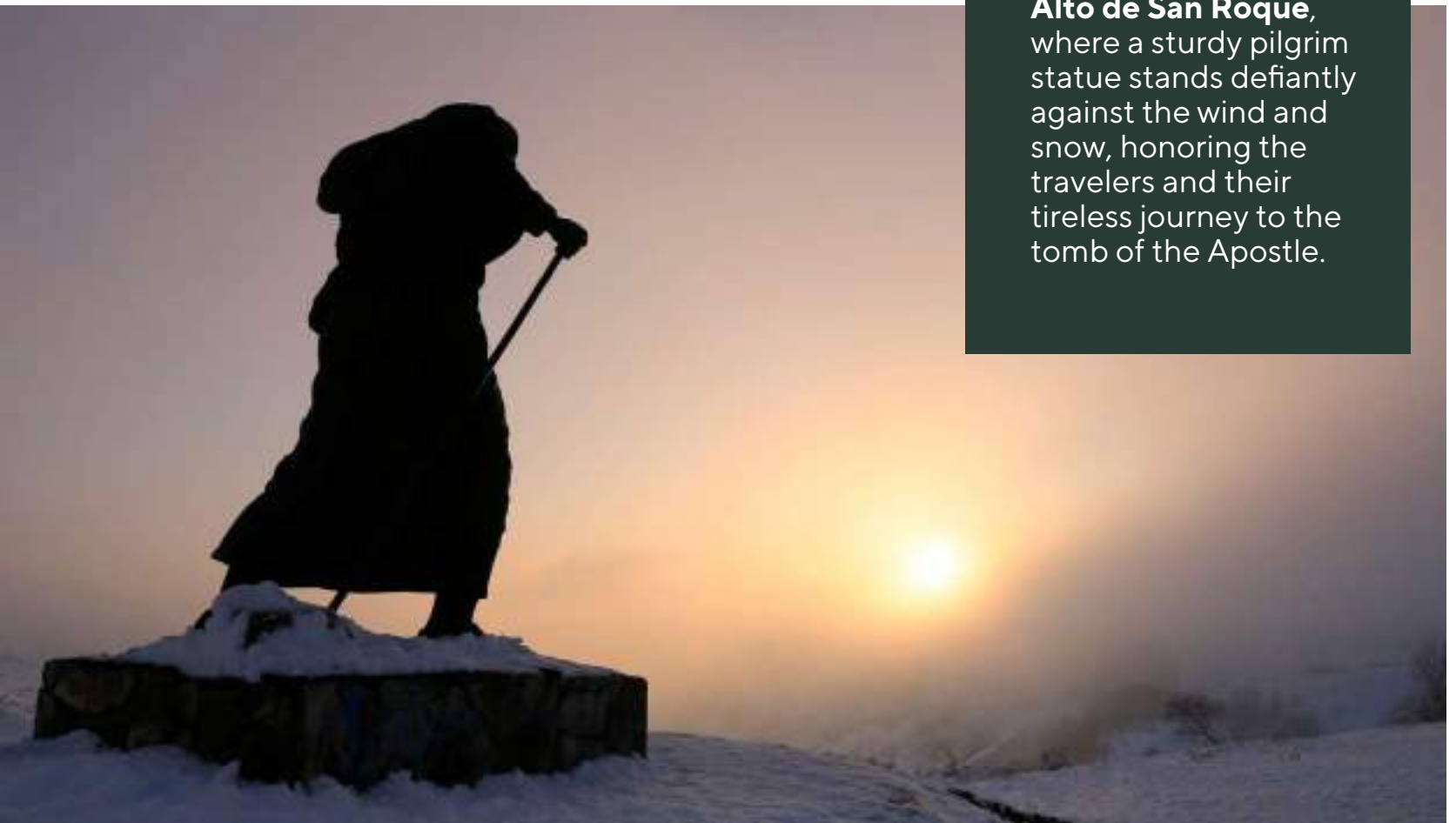


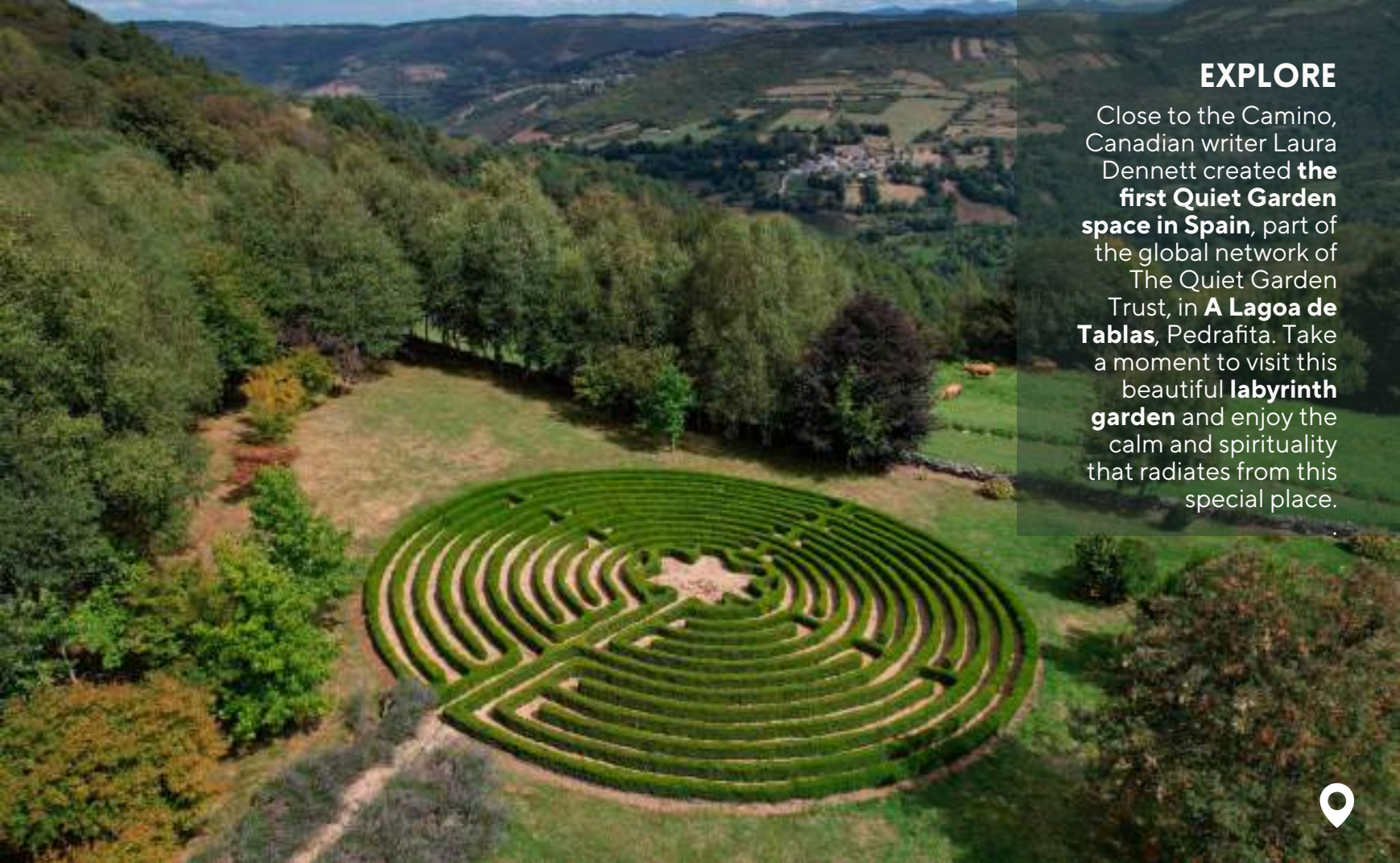
CHURCH OF SAN XOÁN

In O Cebreiro, visit the **Ethnographic Museum** and take the opportunity to immerse yourself in the way of life of the **pallozas**, traditional dwellings that serve as a living testimony to ancient pre-Roman settlements.

As you continue along the Camino, you will pass through beautiful villages like **Hospital da Condesa**, whose name comes from one of the oldest pilgrim hospitals on the French route, founded in the 9th century, though no traces of it remain today. What endures, with its extraordinary mountain beauty, is the 12th-century **Church of San Xoan**, which is linked to the **Order of Malta**.

Before reaching Hospital da Condesa, you'll come to the **Alto de San Roque**, where a sturdy pilgrim statue stands defiantly against the wind and snow, honoring the travelers and their tireless journey to the tomb of the Apostle.





EXPLORE

Close to the Camino, Canadian writer Laura Dennett created **the first Quiet Garden space in Spain**, part of the global network of The Quiet Garden Trust, in **A Lagoa de Tablas**, Pedrafita. Take a moment to visit this beautiful **labyrinth garden** and enjoy the calm and spirituality that radiates from this special place.

TASTE

For enthusiasts of traditional cuisine, O Cebreiro offers a culinary haven, rooted in high-quality local products. Highlights include **Rubia Galega beef**, protected under the Protected Designation of Origin Ternera Gallega, and the exquisite **cured meats** that bring the area's famous stew to life. **Artisan bread** and sweets made with **Ancares honey, walnuts, and chestnuts** add an authentic touch to the dining experience. However, the undisputed gem is the **Queixo do Cebreiro**, an ancient delicacy with a history dating back to the first monks of the 9th century, continuing to delight palates to this day.

LIVE

O Cebreiro serves as a meeting place for ancient traditions and festivals, celebrating its rich culture and gastronomy through events like the **Annual Livestock Fair** on the third Sunday of September and the **Queixo do Cebreiro Fair** every Good Friday, featuring the renowned cheese and other artisanal products. The **Pedrafita Market**, held on the 5th and 21st of each month, is an agricultural market where visitors can indulge in the local specialty, "pulpo á feira" (Galician-style octopus). Additionally, **San Antonio**, the local patron saint, is honored with a mass and procession on June 13th. The highlight of the year is the **Romería de Santa María A Real de O Cebreiro** on September 8th and 9th, where pilgrims venerate the Holy Miracle while enjoying traditional activities.



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concellopedrafita.es

Tourism Offices
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982 367 129

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TRIACASTELA

STAGE ENDPOINT FROM THE CODEX CALISTINUS

The valley of Triacastela, nestled among mountains, provides a much-needed respite after traversing the challenging and majestic landscape of O Cebreiro. Founded by King Alfonso IX in 1228, Triacastela is noted in the Codex Calixtinus as the endpoint of the penultimate stage of the Camino, underscoring its historical significance as a resting place. Here, where three rivers converge to form the Oribio, you will experience the serenity of an incomparable natural setting.



“
Upon entering
through Biduedo,
the pilgrim
descends towards
Triacastela along
the slopes of
Mount Caldeirón,
with the imposing
Oribio Mountain
ahead.

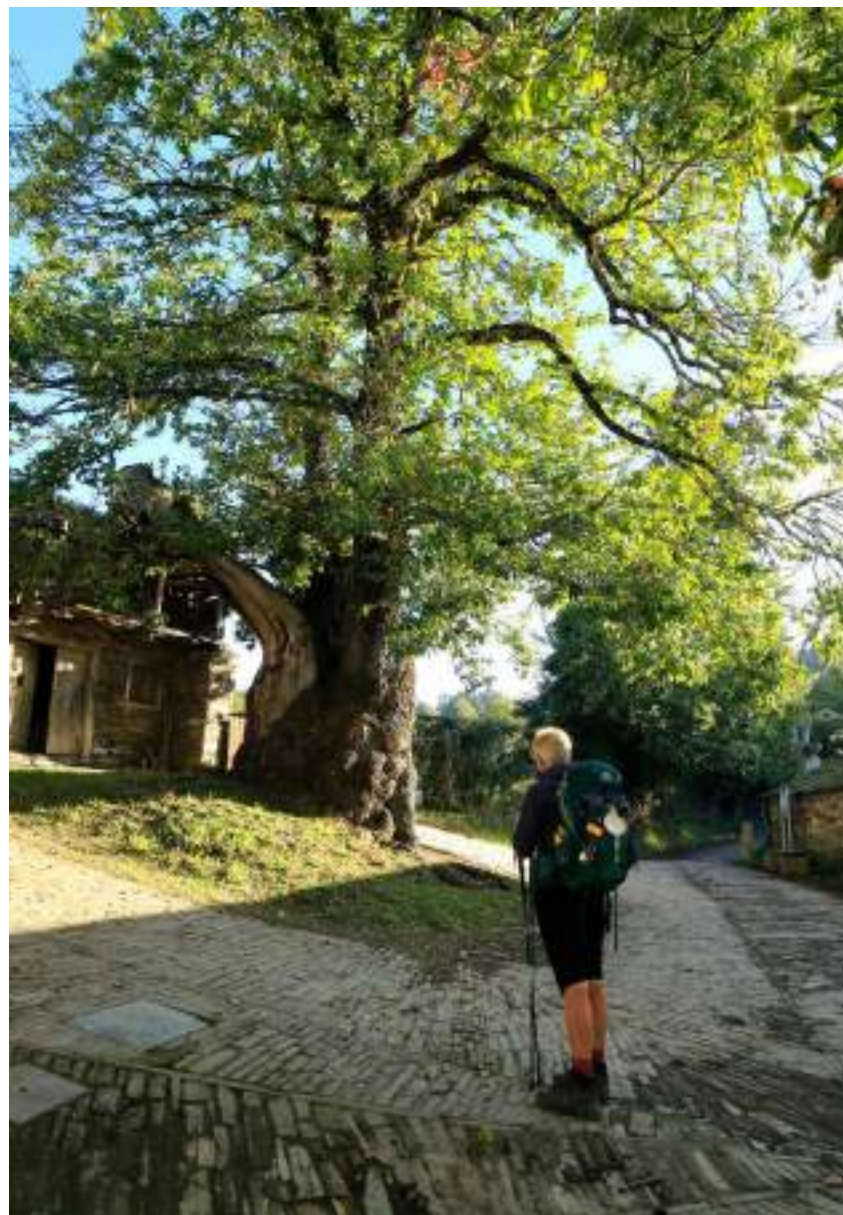
The history of Triacastela and its origins are deeply linked to the Camino de Santiago, although this has been a significant human settlement since prehistoric times, as evidenced by important Neanderthal discoveries at the **Cova de Eirós** site.

Reaching Biduedo, the first village of the municipality, means having conquered the highest elevations of the French Way in Galicia. From there, the path descends into the valley where Triacastela lies, passing through the stunning landscapes of **Fillobal**, **As Pasantes** and **Ramil**.





In **Biduedo**, you will find the **Chapel of San Pedro**, a hermitage considered by many authors to be the smallest on the French Way. Its unique feature is an original entrance atrium with three access arches.



The village of **Ramil**, less than 1 km from Triacastela, stands out for its traditional buildings, such as the **Casa da Tulla**, which has been linked to the monastery of Samos and used for collecting tributes since 1788. One of its main attractions is the **centuries-old chestnut tree**, with a trunk over 8 meters in circumference, which has witnessed more than 800 years of history and is one of the most photographed spots on the Camino.

In Triacastela, beyond its rich traditional architectural heritage, make sure to visit the **Pilgrim Monument**, erected in 1965 in honor of an ancient tradition recorded in the **Codex Calixtinus**. According to this custom, pilgrims would pick up a stone in Triacastela to carry to Castañeda (Arzúa), where it was used to make lime for the construction of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. These limestone stones came from the few outcrops of this material in Galicia, located in Vilavella.



**Leaving Triacastela,
you can choose between
two routes to reach Sarria,
A Balsa-San Xil or Samos.**

If you opt for the A Balsa-San Xil route, you will encounter the **Ferrería da Ponte**, a carefully restored 16th-century forge of remarkable architectural value. This site, a testament to a time when iron and coal were the region's main resources, also served as an inn for pilgrims, providing both food and horseshoeing services.



EXPLORE

One of the most notable and unique places that deserves your visit is a beautiful **alvariza**. Its traditional function was to protect beehives from bear attacks, and now has been restored as an amphitheater.



TASTE

Take a break on the Camino to enjoy the rich gastronomy of Triacastela. This area is particularly known for its meats, especially **Galician beef** and **Celtic pork**, a native breed from which exceptional-quality **lacones**, **cured meats**, and **butelos** are made. **Chestnuts**, featured in many dishes both sweet and savory, along with the local **cheese** and excellent **honey**, complete a unique culinary experience.

LIVE

If you pass through Triacastela on any of these dates, do not hesitate to stop on the Camino and enjoy its traditions. Every August 17th, a traditional pilgrimage is held at the hermitage of **San Mamede** in honor of the saint. Additionally, on the 28th of each month, Triacastela hosts its **traditional monthly fair** on its main street, offering local products and a lively atmosphere. One of the most notable events is the **Craft and Local Products Fair**, which takes place at the end of September when the town becomes a meeting point for artisans and producers.



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concellodetriacastela.es

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982 546 055

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982 548 018

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982 546 008

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SAMOS

HISTORICAL LANDMARK WHERE THE FIRST PILGRIM BEGAN HIS JOURNEY



King Alfonso II the Chaste, who spent his childhood and adolescence at the **Monastery of Samos**, hastened to venerate the Apostle upon the discovery of Santiago's Tomb, thus becoming the **First Pilgrim** in the beginning of the 9th century. Since that time, Samos has held a profound connection with the Camino de Santiago, playing an essential role in its history from the very first moments of that transformative discovery that reshaped Europe.

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SAN CRISTOVO DO REAL

The Camino traverses Samos via two routes: the northern path through San Xil and the southern one that passes by the village of Samos.

The **San Xil route** passes through Valdescuro, amid meadows and riverside forests, and crosses villages such as Pocara, Montán, and Calvor. The **Samos route** follows the Oribio River, lined with groves, pastures, and cultivated land. Both variants are dotted with interesting examples of popular architecture, such as the village of **San Cristovo do Real**. Upon your arrival in Samos, the majestic **Benedictine abbey** greets you, showcasing the splendor of a monastery whose origins date back to the 6th century, and where Father Feijoo, an essential figure of the Spanish Enlightenment, took his vows.



Just a few meters from the Abbey of Samos stands the **Chapel of the Savior** or of the Cypress, an ancient monastic cell from the 9th-10th centuries, built in Mozarabic style with slate slabs, and considered the oldest vestige of the monastery. Next to the chapel, a thousand-year-old cypress tree rises to a height of 25 meters and a circumference of 3.25 meters, recognized as one of the fifty most notable trees in Spain.



As a curiosity, if you visit the abbey, look for the humorous inscription in the Gothic cloister, reconstructed after the fire at the end of the 16th century by Pedro Rodrigues, who incorporated a unique legend that says: "What are you looking at, fool?" Perhaps it served as a reminder to inhabitants and pilgrims not to lose focus on their earthly and spiritual duties.



Near Samos stands the **Casa Forte de Lusío**, a stately mansion founded in 1551 that is now converted into a hostel for pilgrims. Featuring a coat of arms, two floors, and a square tower, it is situated on a hill, offering stunning views of the landscape.



EXPLORE

In the hamlet of Santalla, in the picturesque Val do Lóuzara, an artistic and literary route dedicated to the poet Fiz Vergara leads to the spectacular **Santalla waterfall**, a beautiful and valuable space surrounded by lush Atlantic vegetation.



TASTE

The culinary tradition of Samos is notable for the quality of its products, sourced from its fertile pastures and crystal-clear rivers. Beef and pork, especially **Celtic pork**, are highly valued and take center stage in gastronomic events. The pastries, famous for the **Samos sponge cakes**, whose monastic recipe is over 250 years old, are complemented by extraordinary **cheeses, honey, walnuts**, and **chestnuts**, which also play a prominent role in delicious traditional recipes.

LIVE

If you pass through Samos in the summer, you can enjoy its traditions through two notable fairs. The **Samos Craft Products Fair**, held on the second Sunday of August, and the **Crafts Fair** at a **Ponte de Lóuzara** on August 17th, offer handcrafted products, local cuisine, and reenactments of traditional trades in a festive atmosphere with music and typical dances. Alongside these fairs, the **San Benito Festival**, held on the second Sunday of July, will connect you with the rich cultural heritage of the area.



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concellosamos.gal

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628 274 541

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Sarria Post Office
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Health Center
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Pharmacy
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982 546 008

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SARRIA

THE VILLAGE OF THE CAMINO



The ancient town of Sarria, with more than eight hundred years of history, has been a waypoint for pilgrims since the Middle Ages. Since its foundation in the 12th century by Alfonso IX, pilgrimages have left a profound mark on its history, fostering a remarkable cultural and artistic flourishing that led to the creation of monasteries, churches, and stately homes throughout the region. Sarria exists, without a doubt, for and because of the Camino de Santiago.



Throughout the stage where the Camino passes through Sarria, you will enjoy not only unique landscapes, crossing villages and native forests of great environmental value, but also beautiful works of art unexpectedly integrated into the landscape and architecture.

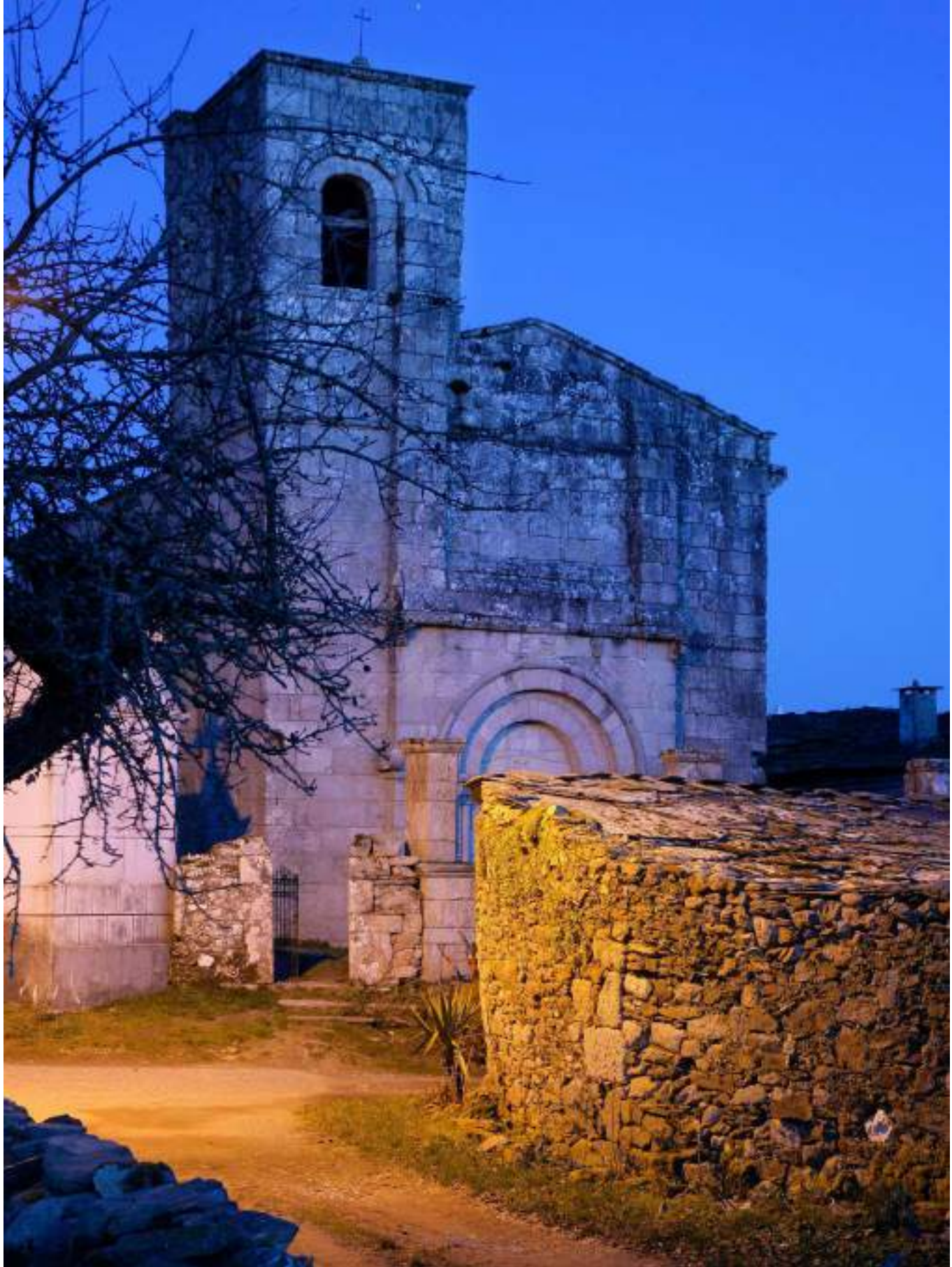
This is the case with the impressive mural that covers the walls of a shed in the village of Perros, in the parish of Santo Estevo de Calvor, along the San Xil Route. The artist Eva Mena depicts women dressed in traditional attire here, paying tribute to all the women from the rural areas of Galicia. This work is part of an interesting initiative aimed at beautifying the French Way through the art of various creators.

“Many pilgrims begin their Camino in Sarria, the place where Alfonso IX himself passed away before completing his fourth pilgrimage to Compostela.

Passing through the town of Sarria will allow you to explore its historic center and enjoy its rich heritage and vibrant social and cultural life. As you walk along **Rúa Maior**, you can see the medieval tower, which remains the only witness to the **ancient fortress** erected between the 12th and 13th centuries to defend the region and protect pilgrims.

Among the monasteries established in the Middle Ages to support the needs of pilgrims, the **Monastery of A Madalena** is particularly noteworthy in Sarria. Founded in the 12th century, almost concurrently with the town's emergence, it served as both a hospital and a place of lodging for those journeying to Compostela. While its architecture still showcases Romanesque elements, significant renovations occurred in the 19th century. Situated directly on the Camino, it has recently revitalized its original purpose as a hostel for pilgrims.





Leaving Sarria via the Ponte da Áspera, the Camino continues, leading you to beautiful spots like the **Church of Santiago de Barbadelo**. This 12th-century Romanesque gem was once part of an ancient monastery and pilgrims' shelter, referenced as early as the 9th century in the **Codex Calixtinus**.

EXPLORE

The curious and unique **pampónigas** that dance during the San Juan festivities are a cultural treasure of Sarria that you should not miss if you are in the town during that time.



TASTE

When you pass through Sarria, be sure to indulge in its exquisite cuisine, which includes the renowned **mineral waters** from Fontecelta. The town is famous for its high-quality meats, such as **Celtic pork**, from which exceptional **cured meats** are crafted, as well as **Galician beef**. Don't miss the chance to try the delicious **empanadas** and **artisan breads**. If your visit coincides with All Saints' Day, you can savor the **Santitos**, traditional cookies made for this festive occasion. Additionally, the **Torta de Sarria**, crafted from almonds and chestnuts, is a delectable dessert you won't want to overlook.

LIVE

Sarria boasts a vibrant cultural and festive life, with notable events throughout the year such as **Carnival**, **Holy Week**, the **San Xoán** patronal festival in June, **Corpus Christi** with its traditional **floral carpets**, and the emblematic **Romería dos Remedios** on September 8th. Music and festivals are also prominent, featuring events like **Sarria Blues no Camiño** in August, the **International Magic Festival**, **Esmorga Fest**, and **Ultreia et Suseia** in July, which is framed within the Camino and includes activities such as music, theater, and storytelling. Additionally, the **San Lázaro Antiques Fair** takes place on the first weekend of May. The **traditional market** in Campo da Feira, held on the 6th, 20th, and 27th of each month, is an ideal opportunity to enjoy the local dish, pulpo á feira, which you won't want to miss.



Town Hall
982 535 000
sarria.gal

Tourism Office
982 530 668
sarriaturismo.com

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982 530 793

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982 532 111

Pharmacies
982 530 418
982 531 093
982 531 756
982 531 088

Policía Municipal
676 465 334
982 530 850

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PARADELA

BIRTHPLACE OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE KNIGHTS OF SANTIAGO



Paradela is a municipality of significant symbolic importance on the Jacobean Camino. This is where the **Monastery of Santa María de Loio** once stood, with origins tracing back to a hermitic community from the 5th century. Today, only its chapel and some nearby remnants stay as testimony to its history. It is said that in 1170, during the reign of Fernando II, this was the first settlement of the Military Order of Santiago. Here, thirteen knights gathered to pledge their protection for both the pilgrims and the Tomb of the Apostle, thus establishing the principles that would govern the **Order of the Knights of Santiago**.

The Camino through Paradela is dotted with elements of great natural and cultural beauty.



Continuing along the Camino, you will find the **Church of Santa María de Ferreiros**. This temple, associated with the **Knights of the Order of Saint John**, was originally a priory of the Encomienda of Portomarín and included a hospital for pilgrims. In the 18th century, after being relocated stone by stone from Eirexe, the temple became a parish church. Of its original Romanesque structure, only the spectacular main entrance with three semicircular archivolts remains, while the rest has been modified.



Near the Church of Santa María de Ferreiros stands another milestone of the Camino, the marker indicating **100 kilometers** remaining to the long-awaited destination at the tomb of the Apostle.

This is the minimum distance required to obtain **the Compostela**, a tradition that dates back to the early centuries of the pilgrimage to Santiago, when certifying completion became necessary. Initially, badges such as the scallop shell were used, which were easy to forge. To address this issue, excommunication penalties were imposed on forgers. Starting in the 13th century, certificates of proof were issued, which were more difficult to counterfeit and served as the direct precursor to the modern Compostela.



Deeply connected to the ancient Jacobean routes, don't miss the opportunity to visit the monastery of San Facundo de Ribas de Miño, founded around 1120 to accommodate pilgrims on their journey to Santiago.

After a conflict in which Queen Doña Urraca destroyed the Portomarín bridge, the Benedictine monks settled by the Miño River to ferry pilgrims across in boats. Although the bridge was soon rebuilt, **San Facundo de Ribas de Miño** continued to provide refuge for those who could not afford the toll, offering them care, attention, and hospitality. Today, it is a charming monumental complex situated in a unique setting surrounded by vineyards and offering magnificent views of the river. Its church, with a low vault supported by six sturdy stone arches, is considered by some scholars to be the first Gothic-style church on the Iberian Peninsula



EXPLORE

In the capital of the municipality stands the **statue** honoring the **Knights of the Order of Santiago**, which pays tribute to those who dedicated their lives to provide protection and shelter to the pilgrims who ventured along the Camino during the Middle Ages.



TASTE

The cuisine of Paradela proudly features **eel** as its undisputed star. Whether fried, stewed, or baked in a pie, this delicacy draws a substantial number of diners throughout the year. Essential dishes include **cocido galego**, made with **turnip tops** or **cabbage**, and expertly cooked **Galician beef**. Local **chestnuts** and **apples** are prepared in various ways, enhancing both desserts and meat dishes. Additionally, the **wines from Ribeira Sacra**, cultivated on the region's distinctive terraced slopes, offer the perfect pairing for any meal. To top it all off, don't miss the chance to try the delicious **Paradela cake**.

LIVE

On the 15th of each month, Paradela hosts its **traditional fair**, featuring the iconic pulpeiras who are always in attendance. The festival in honor of **San Isidro**, the patron saint of agriculture, takes place on May 15th, celebrating the region's rural traditions. If you visit Paradela on this date, you can experience an **authentic livestock fair**, culminating in a mouthwatering **Galician beef barbecue**, paired with exquisite wines from Ribeira Sacra and accompanied by lively festive music. Furthermore, the villages within the municipality celebrate numerous festivities throughout the year, preserving their rich ancient traditions.



Town Hall
982 541 101
paradela.es

Tourist Information
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PORTOMARÍN

MARK OF THE HOSPITALER ORDER OF SAINT JOHN OF JERUSALEM

As you continue along the Camino, Portomarín appears in the distance, crowned by the beautiful and imposing Romanesque **Church of San Nicolás**, formerly known as San Juan. This grand fortress-church was built by the **Order of Saint John** to protect the ancient entry bridge and to serve as a hospital for pilgrims. The church, along with much of the old medieval village, was moved stone by stone from its original location due to the construction of the Belesar reservoir in the 1950s. Despite this relocation, Portomarín has preserved its most significant monuments and the charm of traditional Galician architecture, with cobbled streets and houses with arcades.



Portomarín's historical significance dates back to the **12th century**, rooted in the Compostela pilgrimages as part of the French Camino. Of Roman origin, the old Portomarín was a beautiful medieval town, divided into two districts—San Juan and San Pedro—located on either bank of the river.

With the construction of the **Belesar reservoir**, the town was submerged under the waters of the Miño River, but all its significant and historically valuable buildings were relocated beforehand. If the waters are low, as you cross the new bridge upon entering Portomarín, you may still see the ancient stone remains emerging as silent witnesses to a past that refuses to disappear completely





Relocated from the old Portomarín, the staircase of the medieval bridge and the Capilla das Neves were placed at the end of the new bridge to keep the historical memory of the pilgrimages alive.

The Romanesque chapel and the medieval bridge of Roman origin on which it stands occupy the site where the **hospital of the Order of Saint John** once was. Since the Middle Ages, this chapel has been a key location on the Camino, where pilgrims received a blessing before embarking on the final stage to Compostela. The **Codex Calixtinus** already highlighted its significance as an essential point along the route, giving it profound symbolic value.



The **Church of San Pedro**, now located in the urban center just a few meters from the emblematic 17th-century **Pazo de Berbeteros**, was reconstructed from its previous site, retaining only the Romanesque arches from the late 12th century. This was the original period of its construction, when it was the first temple encountered by pilgrims arriving in Portomarín.



EXPLORE

The original route of the Camino runs alongside the defensive complex of the **Castro de Castromaior**, an Iron Age site of particular significance for the study of Celtic culture in the Iberian Northwest.



TASTE

In Portomarín, you can continue to savor the excellent variety of meats and vegetables characteristic of Atlantic cuisine, but three unique elements are not to be missed: its **aguardiente**, the **Tarta de Portomarín** (also known as Tarta de Santiago), which is a true symbol of Galician pastry, and the **eels** that form the basis of exquisite dishes. Aguardiente, derived from the distillation of fermented grapes, is a hallmark of Portomarín and serves as the primary ingredient in Galicia's most iconic drink, queimada.

LIVE

Every Easter Sunday, the **Aguardiente Festival** is held to honor the augardenteiros who have been distilling this traditional liquor for generations. During the celebration, new knights and ladies of the **Serenísima Orde da Alquitara**, an order established to preserve and promote this cherished pomace, are named in a traditional ceremony. Visitors can sample the aguardiente while watching its artisanal production process. In addition to this festival, Portomarín celebrates its **patronal festivities** on the first Sunday of September and hosts a **traditional market** on the 9th of each month. Throughout August, the **Folkloric Sundays** provide an excellent opportunity to enjoy and explore the rich local cultural heritage.



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MONTERROSO

HOSPITAL AND PILGRIMS' CEMETERY

The French Way crosses the lands of Monterroso, beginning its descent from the Sierra de Ligonde to reach the village of the same name. As early as the 10th century, records attest to the significance of this site in caring for pilgrims journeying to the tomb of Santiago. Ligonde, with its ancient hospital and pilgrims' cemetery, stood as a refuge where travelers found rest and relief on their devoted journey to Compostela.





The **Cruceiro de Lameiros** greets pilgrims as they approach the first houses of the village. This unique monument, dating back to 1670, is rich in symbolism. The double-sided cross features depictions of the crucified Jesus and the Virgin of Sorrows. Its base, composed of three levels, is intricately carved with the instruments used in the Descent from the Cross. The ladder, the tongs, and the crown of thorns symbolize the spiritual and physical sacrifice of those who pass by.

As you pass through the village of Ligonde, a stone cross marks the spot where, for over a millennium, those who lost their lives on the Camino were buried.

The ancient **Pilgrims' Hospital**, which has now disappeared, was donated in the 10th century by Count Osorio to his wife as an act of penance for his sins. Records of the hospital persisted until the early 19th century, indicating that it was still operational during that time. It was situated on a property across from the current Monterroso road, where no remnants of the building remain today, and the area is now used as pasture.

Next to the hospital lay the **Pilgrims' Cemetery**, which also has no visible remains. Today, it is commemorated by a simple cross on a stone wall, serving as a reminder of where it once stood.



Another site of great significance is the **Church of Santiago**, whose origins likely date back to the 11th century.

This church displays a unique detail on its exterior that enhances the character of the entire structure. Embedded in the wall, nearly level with the ground, there lies an ancient **pre-Romanesque sarcophagus**. Despite its eroded surface, it still faintly depicts the scene of Daniel in the lion's den, a recurring motif in Paleochristian art that resonates with the heritage of centuries past.



EXPLORE

The **Centro de Interpretación Monterroso, a Vila das Feiras**, is the result of the efforts of Father Don Carlos Méndez Vázquez, whose personal collection became part of the municipal heritage. This space showcases historical pieces that explore both the history of A Ulloa and the influence of the Monterroso Fair.



TASTE

As you pass through Monterroso, you'll have the opportunity to enjoy authentic and delicious cuisine. Be sure to try the **A Ulloa cheese**, a soft and creamy delicacy that makes for the perfect dessert to savor the best of the region. Other emblematic products not to be missed include **artisan bread** and **empanadas**, as well as local **chestnuts**, which are exceptional in both sweet and savory recipes.

LIVE

The **local market** takes place on the first day of each month, while the **Santa Lucía Market**, dedicated to agricultural products, is held on the second and fourth Sundays. However, the most notable event is undoubtedly the **Feira de Santos** on November 1st, likely the oldest and most renowned fair in Galicia, with records dating back to the 13th century. Among local festivities, **San Cristóbal** is celebrated on July 10th with the traditional blessing of vehicles and a picnic in A Peneda. In August, the village hosts the **Agrocuir** festival, and the most significant patronal celebration, **San Miguel**, takes place on September 29th.



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PALAS DE REI

LANDMARK OF GALICIAN ROMANESQUE IN THE CAMINO



The stretch between Monterroso and Palas de Rei was under the guardianship of the **Knights of the Order of Santiago** since 1184, who ensured the safety of the route for centuries. Although the **Monastery of Vilar de Donas** is situated off the main path, its protective influence resonates throughout the journey. Today, the Church of Vilar de Donas, with its striking beauty, is regarded as one of the most iconic examples of Galician Romanesque architecture associated with the Camino de Santiago.



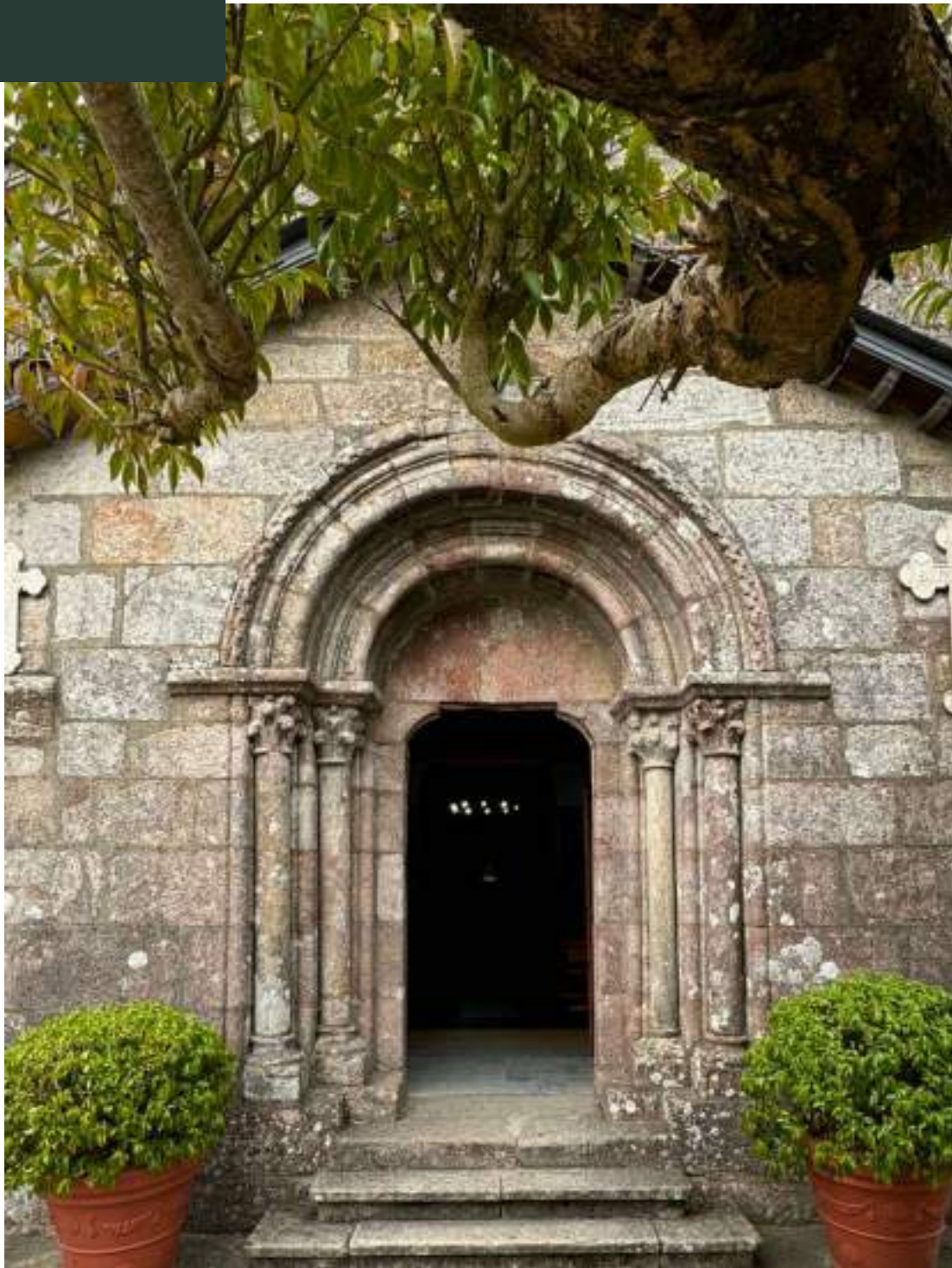
While traversing the verdant trails of the Camino through Palas de Rei, a detour to visit the Monastery of Vilar de Donas is well worth your time.

The **Church of Vilar de Donas**, dating from the 13th century, is a gem of Romanesque architecture with its magnificent portal of decorated archivolt and remnants of an old cloister. Linked to the monastery of the **Order of Santiago**, its interior houses valuable Gothic stone sculptures, paintings covering the central apse like a retablo, and tombs of knights of the Order, creating a space of great historical and artistic significance.



The French Way crosses through Palas de Rei, whose medieval origins are documented in the Codex Calixtinus as the starting point of the final stage to Santiago.

The town flourished with the early pilgrimages, leaving behind a valuable Romanesque heritage, such as the **Church of San Tirso**. This 12th-century church has been modified over time, retaining only its main entrance from the original structure. For pilgrims, San Tirso is a must-stop where they can stamp their Compostela before continuing toward their final destination.



As the Camino departs Palas de Rei, it meanders along magnificent wooded paths. Before reaching the village of San Xiao do Camiño, home to a 12th-century church dedicated to San Julián, you will come across the **Pond of San Xiao**. Nestled on the right side of the Camino, this area boasts remarkable natural beauty and ecological significance. A variety of waterfowl and riverside vegetation thrive in this serene spot, making it a perfect place for a pause during your journey.





EXPLORE

Near the Camino, you can enjoy the beauty of the **Castle of Pambre**. This fortress, built in the late 14th century, was one of the few feudal castles in Galicia to survive the Irmandiña Revolts of the 15th century.

TASTE

As you make your way through Palas de Rei, you will have the opportunity to savor the finest flavors of traditional Galician cuisine. From the exceptional **meats** raised in the region to the **artisanally crafted bread**, the local gastronomy is truly delightful. However, the real treasure here is the **Arzúa-Ulloa Cheese**, a product with Protected Designation of Origin. This cheese has been handmade for generations and is now celebrated both nationally and internationally for its outstanding quality and flavor.

LIVE

Among the festivals in Palas de Rei that you won't want to miss are the **Festival of Ecce Homo** on September 14th, the town's main celebration. Another significant event is the **Vilar de Donas Horse Fair**, held on the second Sunday of August at its racetrack, which draws a large number of participants for the races. The first weekend of September features **Son d'Aldea**, an event focused on rural development, offering various activities and discussion panels. Additionally, on the 7th and 19th of each month, the **local market** takes place, showcasing a wide array of traditional products.



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concellopalasderei.es

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MELIDE

CROSSROADS OF THE CAMINO



Melide, nestled in the heart of Galicia, lies just a few stages from the long-awaited arrival in Santiago. This town serves as a vital junction on the Camino de Santiago, where the **French Way** meets the **Camino Primitivo** from Oviedo. Its significance as a crossroads of Jacobean paths is undeniable, making it a true melting pot of cultures and nationalities. Over the centuries, Melide has welcomed pilgrims from all corners of the world, underscoring its essential role in the spiritual and cultural fabric of the Camino.

CHAPEL OF SAN ROQUE



As Melide comes into view, **the medieval bridge of Furelos**—one of the gems of civil architecture on the Camino de Santiago—opens the way to the hamlet of the same name. Mentioned in documents from the 12th century, Furelos has retained part of its medieval structure. On the banks of the Camino stands the Church of San Xoán, which features an impressive neo-Gothic altarpiece and preserves elements of its Romanesque architecture.

The Camino de Santiago winds through the historic center of Melide, inviting you to pause and take your time to explore its charming corners.

One of the must-see monuments in Melide is the **Chapel of San Roque**, constructed in 1949 with materials salvaged from the ancient churches of San Pedro and San Roque. Its main entrance, one of the most beautiful examples of medieval Galician art, comes from the Church of San Pedro, and inside lie the medieval tombs of notable locals. Adjacent to the chapel stands the **Cruceiro de Melide**, considered the oldest in Galicia, featuring sculptures of Christ in Majesty and a Calvary scene.

In the heart of the town, the **Plaza do Convento** is home to several monumental buildings, including the **Church of Sancti Spiritus**, the **Obra Pía de San Antón**, and the **baroque palace** that houses the Town Hall since 1960. Originally known as the Collegiate Church, it was founded in 1671, and, although only the façade remains, the palace still displays the coat of arms of its former owners.





Where the Primitivo and French Caminos converge, **Santa María de Melide** reveals its striking Romanesque silhouette. As a site of great importance on the Jacobean Camino, it is essential for pilgrims to pause and appreciate the stunning architectural details, the elegant arches of its two entrance doors, and the exquisite interior ornamentation.



EXPLORE

In the Plaza do Convento, the former **Pilgrims' Hospital of Santo Espírito** now houses the **Terra de Melide Museum**. Built in 1502, as noted by the inscription on its facade, the building retains the coat of arms of the Count of Monterrei. Today, the museum showcases a valuable ethnographic and archaeological collection spanning from the Neolithic era to the 20th century.



TASTE

When you arrive in Melide, be sure to indulge in its exquisite cuisine, which features high-quality **meats, vegetables, honey, and cheeses**. However, what will undoubtedly surprise you is one of the culinary stars: **pulpo á feira**, recognized as one of the best in Galicia. You can't leave without trying the traditional **melindres**, small pastries covered in syrup, or the delicious **ricos** made with anise and butter. Other local treats, such as **almendrados**, round out an unforgettable gastronomic experience.

LIVE

The **Melindre and Traditional Pastry Festival of Melide**, held on the second weekend of May, is a prominent gastronomic event that pays tribute to these artisanal sweets. Other important festivities in Melide include the **San Roque, Carmen, and San Antonio Festivals**, as well as the **Day of San Pedro** on June 29th, honoring the town's patron saint. Additionally, the **Foliada de Melide**, a gathering of music and tradition, takes place on the last weekend of April. The **Sunday market** offers a variety of products each week, creating a lively atmosphere in the streets.



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ARZÚA

LAST HOSPITAL FOR PILGRIMS ON THE FRENCH WAY

In this penultimate stage, the French Camino arrives in Arzúa, a town with a long tradition of caring for pilgrims since the Middle Ages. Here, you'll find the Church of La Magdalena, the last remnant of an ancient Augustinian monastery founded in the 14th century. Under the protection of Archbishop Don Pedro, this monastery offered refuge and support to travelers for centuries until the community moved to Santiago in 1692, leaving its walls in silence. In this last hospital before reaching Compostela, pilgrims could find the much-needed relief and rest, just a step away from their long-awaited destination.



Before reaching Arzúa, the Ribadiso Bridge awaits you, as a faithful witness to the passage of pilgrims since the 12th century.



This bridge, key to the route of the Camino de Santiago, has witnessed the journey to Compostela for centuries. Take a moment to pause over the Iso River and breathe in the serenity that envelops this place. As you lift your gaze, you'll discover the hamlet of **Ribadiso**, a cluster of houses that seem to have paused in time, preserving the essence of traditional Galician architecture and offering a space where the past and present intertwine in perfect harmony.

Next to the bridge stands the Ribadiso hostel, a place that has provided refuge to pilgrims for hundreds of years, since its foundation between the 12th and 13th centuries as the **Hospital of San Antonio**. This site has preserved its welcoming essence over time, continuing today to serve as a resting place for pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago.



In Arzúa, the Northern Way merges with the French Way, and pilgrims who have traveled both routes, along with those who have journeyed the Camino Primitivo, all advance together toward Santiago.

As you pass through Arzúa, take a moment to explore its charming corners and meticulously maintained gardens. In the Plaza de Galicia, you can admire the **Monumento ás Queixeiras**, a beautiful sculpture that pays tribute to the women who craft and sell the renowned cheeses of Arzúa, a true symbol of local tradition.



EXPLORE

In the parish of San Cristovo de Dombodán lies the **Waterfall das Hortas**, or Santa Marta Waterfall, a stunning natural setting. The water cascading over the rocks, along with the lush vegetation and a small mill at the foot of the waterfall, creates a scene of remarkable beauty.



TASTE

Discover the rich gastronomy that this region has to offer. The star product is undoubtedly the **Arzúa-Ulloa Cheese**, crafted from the extraordinary fresh milk of local dairy farms. Soft and creamy, this cheese reflects the care and dedication that producers in the area have put in for generations, making it a symbol of the quality of Galician products. Be sure to also try the fresh **vegetables** grown in the region and the delicious **honey**, a natural product whose flavor and quality make it the perfect complement to enjoy with cheese or spread on a slice of **artisan bread**.

LIVE

In early March, the **Cheese Festival** takes place, filling the town with culinary, musical, and cultural events you won't want to miss. On July 16th, the Patron Saint **Festival of Carmen** lights up the locality, and on August 24th, a festive countryside celebration is held at the **Santuario da Mota**. In early September, the celebration at the **Capilla do Viso** brings together locals and visitors for another lively outdoor event. Additionally, Arzúa hosts **biweekly markets** on the 8th and 22nd of each month. In December, the **Capón Fair**, part of the **Christmas Fair**, offers a special occasion to taste this traditional product.



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981 500 006
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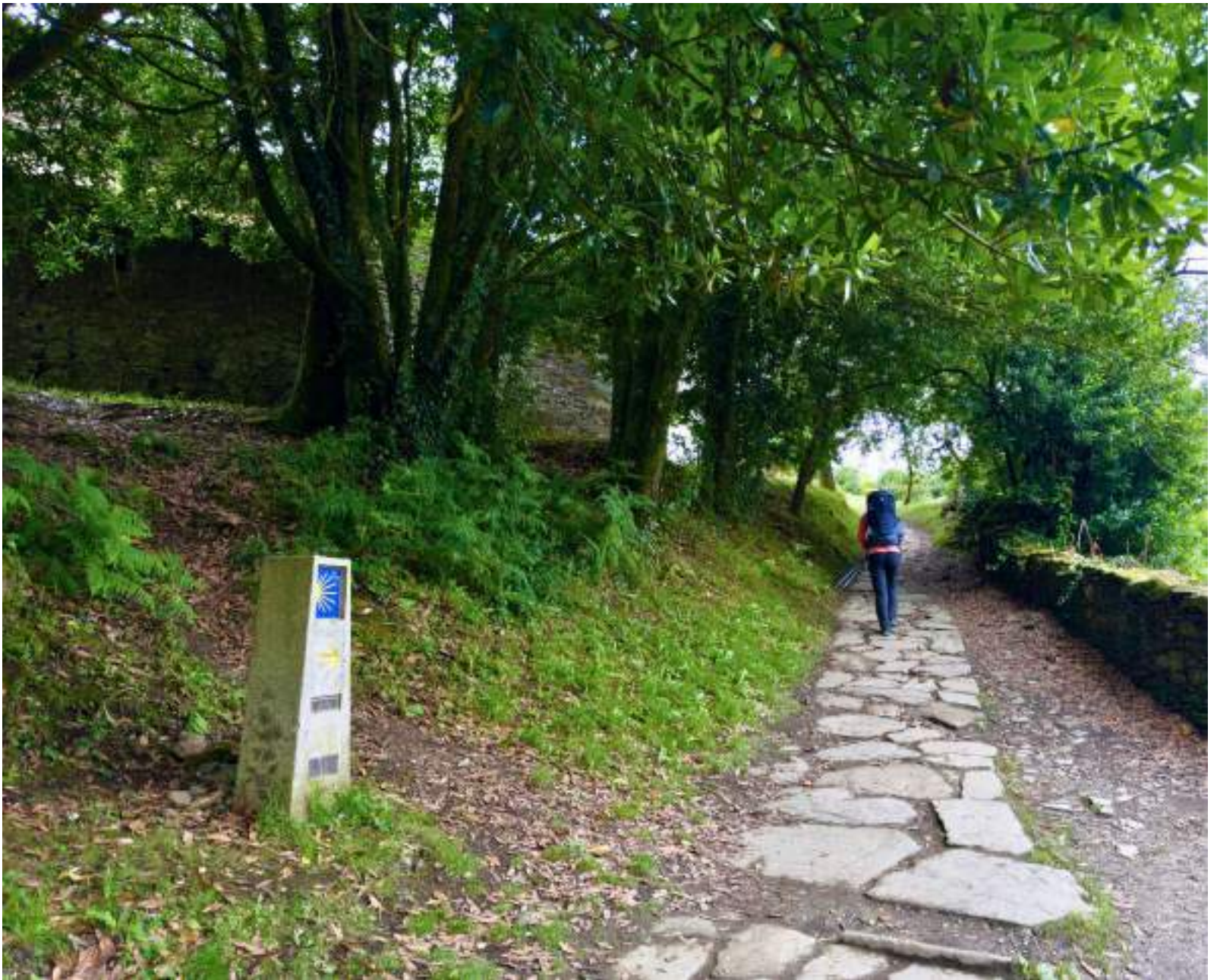




O PINO

THRESHOLD TO COMPOSTELA ON THE CAMINO

O Pino hosts the final stretch of the French Camino to Santiago de Compostela, where the path winds through lush landscapes and peaceful rural roads. The journey begins in the first villages of the municipality, meandering through meadows and forests that accompany the pilgrim on their final approach to Santiago.





As you traverse O Pino, you'll pass through small villages and welcoming towns, perfect for a moment of rest. Step by step, the landscape merges gracefully with traditional buildings and farmland, creating a beautiful contrast between nature and rural life.

Hidden among the abundant vegetation lining the Camino are subtle details that evoke the Jacobean tradition. Keep a watchful eye, and you'll discover ancient stone markers adorned with scallop shells and small, improvised altars—silent witnesses to the passage of pilgrims over the centuries.

Santa Irene, a charming village with stunning natural beauty, offers a special respite for pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago. Beyond its tranquil landscapes, the area boasts notable attractions, including the historic **Chapel of Santa Irene**, which was constructed in the late 17th century.

In the village of Santa Irene, a beautiful stone fountain greets you as you walk along the Camino.

According to tradition, the water from the **Santa Irene Fountain** holds healing powers, aiding in the protection of crops and the health of children, making it a spot rich in meaning. This place offers not only a moment of rest along the journey but also spaces—like its magnificent oak grove—where one can connect with the stories, spirituality, and nature of the surroundings.



The rich ethnographic and architectural heritage of O Pino offers a wide variety of elements that reflect its history and traditions.

The **cruceiros**, particularly the unique cruceiro of Lardeiros from 1700, along with the numerous **hórreos**, **mills**, **fountains**, and **washhouses**, stand as symbols of the traditional rural life of this area. The heritage of prominent families is still reflected in the stately and rectoral houses scattered throughout the municipality, while its religious architecture deserves special mention, featuring remarkable examples across its parishes.

Take a moment during your Camino to visit some of these nearby treasures, such as the **Church of San Breixo de Ferreiros**. Its elegant dome, visible from afar, beckons you to discover more about these historic sites.



EXPLORE

The **Madalena Recreational Area**, located in the parish of Castrofeito, surrounds the chapel of the same name with its majestic grove of oak trees.



TASTE

Local products such as excellent **meats** and **vegetables** are the heart of the cuisine in O Pino. Among these, the most unique and celebrated is the **Piñeiro Rooster**. This **native breed**, believed by various studies to have been introduced by ancient Celtic inhabitants, originates from O Pino and is known for its exceptional quality and distinctive flavor, making it ideal for crafting exquisite dishes. Your journey offers the perfect opportunity to indulge in this culinary treasure.

LIVE

O Pino hosts several popular celebrations, many of which are of a religious nature. Notably, the **Romerías da Madalena** in Castrofeito on July 22nd and the **San Pedro Festival** in Arca on June 29th are both celebrated in beautiful oak groves with traditional outdoor meals. Another significant event is the **Piñeiro Rooster Festival and Horse Show**, held on the first weekend of August in Arca. Here, you can enjoy concerts and a communal meal featuring rooster as the star ingredient. The celebration also includes competitions and equestrian displays, all set in a festive atmosphere that you won't want to miss.



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Finally, after traveling the ancient paths through the **eleven Galician municipalities** traversed by the French Camino, you arrive in **Santiago de Compostela**.

The cathedral towers rise before you, and your footsteps resound on the cobblestone streets that countless pilgrims have walked for centuries. The fatigue will melt away as the bells welcome you, and in that moment, you will know this place is not just the end of the road but the culmination of all your experiences. Around you, the echoes of landscapes, villages, and people encountered along the way will remind you that this journey has been much more than a physical path. You've touched the soul of Galicia, yet there is still so much to discover.

As you depart, we hope you take with you not only memories of the Camino but also the yearning to return, to embark on new routes and uncover the stories still waiting to be told across the eleven Galician municipalities that accompanied you on this unforgettable journey.

*Thanks for Walking
with your Senses*



