

# Cycling the Camino Way

## Portuguese Coastal Route

**September 6 - 21 2019**

Join HOC on a 2 week adventure to Portugal and Spain, which includes a 7 day cycling trip taking the Portuguese Coastal Camino route that will appeal to both trail riders and road cyclists.

Pilgrims from all over the world have walked the [Camino de Santiago](#) trails across Europe for centuries, making their way to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, North-West of Spain.

The most famous route is the [Camino Frances](#) but there are many more wonderful trails both walking and cycling coming from Portugal, France and Spain. Today, more than a pilgrimage, the Camino is an unforgettable experience and unique journey. Approximately 15% of pilgrims on the [Camino de Santiago](#) are following the route by bike. Cyclists on the Camino are known as 'bici-grinos' (bike-pilgrims).

The Portuguese Coastal Camino or *Caminho da Costa* is a stunning alternative route to the traditional Portuguese Camino. Starting from colourful UNESCO-listed [Porto](#), cyclists will discover the wild Atlantic beauty and sandy beaches of Northern Portugal and Galicia, taste delicious seafood and wine, stay in charming seaside towns and fishing villages and feel refreshed by the coastal feel of this scenic Camino de Santiago trail. Total cycle distance is 252 kms.

The trip will start in Lisbon and end in Porto, allowing time for a full day excursion to Sintra (near Lisbon) as well as some time to visit major attractions in both cities.

The trip is being organized with the assistance of Teacher's Travel, with the cycling portion being arranged and led by CaminoWays, a UK provider specializing in Camino excursions (walking and cycling). (<https://caminoways.com/>).

### **Detailed Itinerary**

- Day 1 - Fri Sept 6: Depart Toronto on an overnight direct flight to Lisbon
- Day 2 - Sat Sept 7: Arrive Lisbon and transfer to hotel  
Recover from jet lag
- Day 3 – Sun Sept 8: Half day (morning) Lisbon tour by bus  
Afternoon – some free time to explore Lisbon. I will create a number of costed suggestions for the members' consideration.
- Evening - fado show and dinner

Fado is traditional folk music popular in the [Lisbon area of Portugal](#). Melancholy by nature, the music includes instruments like guitars and mandolins with one Fadista singing. Fado's roots can be traced back to the early 1800's and originated in Portugal. Fado was added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage on November 27, 2011.

Day 4 – Mon Sept 9: Full day tour to Sintra with lunch

Long the home of Portugal's monarchs, Sintra is a magnificent town of marvelous historic mansions, all set against the backdrop of lush hills. Sintra's many castles include the Palácio Nacional de Sintra (a main abode of Portuguese royalty until the early 20th century), the hilltop and storybook Palácio da Pena, Quinta de Regaleira (incorporating several architectural styles and with gorgeous surrounding gardens), the Castelo dos Mouros (Moorish Castle), and the Palácio de Monserrate.

Day 5 – Tues Sept 10: Morning bus to Porto – check into Porto hotel and meet our guide

Located along the Douro River Valley in Northern Portugal, Porto is one of the oldest European cities and its historical center was proclaimed a World Heritage Site by Unesco in 1996. There is a rich heritage dating from the Middle Ages to the beginning of the 20th Century. Enjoy a stroll along the pretty Póvoa de Varzim harbour and explore its medieval district before you continue your Camino. Walk up to the Convento de Santa Clara to discover the best views of the town and the surrounding coast.

Day 6 - Wed Sept 11: Get bikes and cycle 49 km from Porto to Esposende

On your way to Esposende you will pass the popular seaside town of Póvoa de Varzim with its sandy beachfront and cross the Coastal Natural Park, Parque Natural do Litoral Norte. Esposende is a seaside city located in the North.

Day 7 - Thurs Sept 12: Cycle 43 km to Vila Praia de Ancora

Today you will leave Viana do Castelo and continue along the beautiful Atlantic coastline heading north. Today is quite an easy day, giving you plenty of time to enjoy a relaxed pace and have enough time to make the most of the seaside villages and towns along the way. You will stay in the coastal town Vila Praia de Ancora.

Day 8 - Fri Sept 13: Cycle 43 km to Baiona

From the fishing village of A Guarda, your path continues northwards where you will be afforded some more breathtaking views of the ocean on your left. Tonight you will reach the busy seaside town of Baiona with its gorgeous marina. In the days of the famous voyages of Christopher Columbus, this was the first port to hear about the discovery of America and today a replica of the Pinta is permanently moored in the harbor. Apart from the sea landscape, you can also get lost in the old city center, made up of a tangle of inviting lanes, with a handful of 16th and 17th-century houses and chapels. There are quite a few churches and other small buildings of architectural and historical interest, but Bayona's most prominent building is the Castelo de Monterreal, a castle on the edge of the town, providing excellent views of the town and the surrounding coastline from its elevated position. While in Baiona, visit one of the town's attractions such as the Museo de la Carabela Pinta and the Monumento Encuentro entre dos Mundos.

Day 9 - Sat Sept 14: Cycle 26 km to Vigo

Today you will follow the coast from Baiona to Nigrán and finally to the city of Vigo. You will enjoy fantastic views of the Bay of Vigo, with the magnificent Illas Cíes and its Natural Park in the horizon. On a hot day, stop at the blue flag beach Praia América in Nigrán for a quick swim.

Day 10 - Sun Sept 15: Cycle 35 km to Pontevedra

Today is your last day along the coast and quite a short cycling day so you can make the most of the seaside. Stop to try the famous oysters in the fishing village of Arcade. Your final point is the city of Pontevedra, with its pretty historic centre. Today will offer time to explore the old town, with its many Romanesque churches and quaint granite squares.

Day 11- Mon Sept 16: Cycle 40 km to Padron

From Caldas de Reis you will cross the river Umia and find the hot springs that have given the town its name since Roman times. The trail once again takes you to forests and gradually climbs to the village of Santa Mariña. You will continue on the Camino through pine forests to today's destination: the town of Padrón. When the body of Saint James was being brought to Compostela by boat, Padrón was said to be the first land it reached.

Day 12 - Tues Sept 17: Cycle 25 km to Santiago de Compostela

It does not matter whether or not you believe in the legend of St. James and value of the "pilgrimage", Santiago is one of Spain's finest cities. The cathedral of Santiago dominates the golden granite square with its Baroque towers, covered everywhere with ornamentation. The city is surrounded by the hilly, lush terrain of Galicia, dramatic coastal scenery, delicious seafood, fine local wines, and an easygoing ambiance.

Take time to explore this gem of a city, small and vibrant. Its UNESCO listed old town will enchant you. In Santiago de Compostela you will find not only pilgrims but also locals and students, socialising and enjoying a few bites and glasses of wine in the many bars, restaurants and cosy cafes. Santiago de Compostela old town is a UNESCO-listed heritage site since 1985 and its University dates back to 1495. The Council of Europe named the Camino de Santiago as the first European Cultural itinerary in 1987 for its important role encouraging cultural exchanges since the Middle Ages.

Receive [Compostela certificate](#) because we will have cycled more than 200 kms

Day 13 - Wed Sept 18:           Extra night in Santiago

Explore the city, take a break from the cycling and savour the accomplishment

Day 14 - Thurs Sept 19:       Bus to Porto (approx. 3 hours)

Explore Porto. There are a number of things to do in Porto, and I will arrange some costed itineraries. Members could explore on their own or with a group.

Day 15 - Fri Sept 20:   Porto

Last day to unwind and have some free time

Day 16 – Sat Sept 21: Fly home – direct flight Porto-Toronto

**Bikes:** CaminoWays provides an aluminum 27-gear mountain bike with break disks and 27.5 inch wheels, as standard. These bikes are specifically designed for the Camino de Santiago terrain and will be adapted to each cyclist's height.

The bike comes with a rack, pannier pack, bottle holder, lock and reflectors. Upgraded bikes and ebikes area available at additional cost.

Helmets are mandatory (and are not provided).

**The terrain is varied and could be a mix of trails similar to trails in Ontario, and paved roads. The cyclists share the same route as the walking pilgrims.**

**The Portuguese Coastal route is classified as “easy to moderate” and described as a journey for experienced cyclists, as well as a good route for families with children.**

**The first three days are relatively flat, mostly on hard surfaces, but there is varied terrain. The last three days are the moderate portion of this tour, on varied terrain, with some short, steep hills to contend with.**

### **Accommodations**

Accommodations on the cycle route including Porto and Santiago will be in family-run hotels and guesthouses (2-3 star) along the Camino, selected by the tour providers for their character and warm hospitality. Luggage will be transported daily during the cycle route.

Accommodations in Lisbon are being arranged by Teachers Travel, who run their own trips in this area (3 star hotel).

Breakfast is included at all hotels along the route. We would purchase our lunches along the way. Some dinners are included.

### **Cost**

Prices may fluctuate depending on exchange rates at the time of travel. Air prices cannot be confirmed more than 11 months in advance and are based on current flight costs with a small increase.

Please appreciate that the Camino journey is a pilgrimage, and on the route when dinners are included we will be served “The Pilgrim menu” which is usually simple such as soup, pasta and dessert. It is a group menu so offers no choice. An upgraded menu might be available for about 10 euros per dinner. This still would not let each person choose a separate meal. The Camino hotel and restaurants consider pilgrims very frugal so offer them a “no frills” menu.

Price per person in Canadian dollars (double occupancy) \$5,011

Includes:

- 11 night Caminoways package including breakfasts, 4 dinners & guide
- Bicycle rental
- Luggage transportation on cycle days
- 3 nights in Lisbon including breakfast
- Sintra tour with lunch
- Fado show and dinner in Lisbon
- Half day Lisbon tour
- All ground transportation
- Air fare (estimated)

HOC fee – additional \$25

Credit card (optional) \$105

To avoid the credit card fee people can pay by cheque or by Interac transfer. Some people prefer to pay by credit card because they have insurance benefits from using the card.

Single supplement \$660

Due by Aug. 7, 2018 to Teachers Travel: \$500

Due upon registration to HOC: \$25

Second deposit due Sept 30: \$500 (TBC)

Balance – date TBC: \$4,011

### **Exclusions**

Lunches

Dinners except where indicated

Items of a personal nature

Tips for hotel personnel (optional)

Entry fees to attractions except where indicated

Alcoholic beverages

If you have any questions please contact the HOC trip leader:

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