

Pilgrim's route the Camino Portugués, from Porto (P) to Tui (S)

The Camino Portugués is a pilgrimage route from Lisbon to Santiago de Compostella in Spain. Through the interior of Portugal and Spain. This pilgrimage includes the famous pilgrimage site of Fatima. For many pilgrims who follow this route, Fatima is the final destination.

In recent years, from Porto and further north, variants have emerged that follow the coast of both countries: the Senda Litoral, for example. Or the Camino da Costa. Which simply means coastal route. Or in the Spanish part of the route where a so-called "spiritual coastal route" has been designed.



The yellow arrow as a marker

Pilgrim Routes and Pilgrimages, then and now

The emergence of the variants will no doubt have to do with the growing need for spirituality, meaning and reflection and for opportunities to shape these needs. I can also imagine that pilgrims today prefer to pilgrimage in scenic settings. And then the coast of Portugal might be more attractive than inland. A recruiting advertising text about such a variant is clear about that: "discover the wild Atlantic beauty and sandy beaches of northern Portugal and Galicia, taste delicious seafood and wine, stay in fishing villages and feel refreshed by the coastal feel of this scenic path of Camino de Santiago."

Pilgrims used to walk, say in the Middle Ages, not for the beautiful scenery, for impressive views, beautiful coastlines or for a nice wine with seafood. They walked for devotion, for forgiveness of sins, obtaining indulgences, fulfilling a promise, penance, pure inspiration, wanting to visit a shrine, out of thanksgiving, deepening and reflection.....and then the route to be walked was determined by "the shortest way." Not the prettiest.

But whether the pilgrim anno 2019 is still satisfied with only the shortest way? I don't think so.

Porto – Tui

We walked the route between Porto and Tui, the first Spanish town on the way to Santiago de Compostella. Via the original and therefore oldest route. The Camino do Norte. Also the route with the most chapels, churches and cathedrals. And that indeed means that sometimes you wonder: "why doesn't the route go up that beautiful hill". And then it soon becomes clear: because following the route has in it a beautiful old chapel from 1674.

Porto and further north

Porto on the Douro River has a beautiful historic center in which many buildings have exterior facades full of azulejos, blue and white tiles. Together they represent a certain image. For such representations, check out the inside of the city's main train station as well.

And if you still have time for an evening of Portuguese folk music: do the fado.....!

We took a cab to Maio, a suburb of Porto. To avoid the walk through the expected boring suburbs of Porto. You can also take the train or the subway.

After which you gradually leave behind the bustle of the city and enter the rolling countryside. Country roads, vineyards, eucalyptus forests, old Roman cobblestone roads, villages and old fortified towns with the necessary historical buildings. Like Sao Pedro de Rates with its beautiful ancient Romanesque church.



Sao Pedro de Rates

The first climb of this Camino to the top of the Alto de Muher. And the descent through a eucalyptus forest to Barcelos. This ancient town with medieval bridge, Romanesque cathedral, beautiful plazas and unique oval Templo de Bom Jesus.



Templo de Bom Jesus Barcelos

Barcelos and further north

After Barcelos begins a tough climb to the top of the Alto de Portella and the descent to the Ponte das Tabuas located in the vineyards. Here you cross the Rio Neiva via a beautiful medieval bridge.

Ponte de Lima and further north

One of the oldest towns in Portugal, best known for its namesake: the bridge over the Lima River. Originally a structure of the Romans, what you see today is mostly medieval. The Camino approaches the town via the south bank of the river. Which gives you a nice view of the bridge, with the white Igreja de Santo Antonio da Torre Velha in the background.



Ponte de Lima

After Ponte de Lima, the landscape becomes greener, higher, more beautiful and less densely populated. Among other things, with a tough climb to Portella Grande (460 m). And the beautiful descent to the valley of Coura River. This is also the region of vinho verde, the "green wine."

We have now arrived in an area where it can rain heavily. The excavated dirt roads of the Camino then act as drains for the abundant rainwater. It takes a while but after a while the childish feelings win out over the adult annoyances. At least with some of us....Others think it's time to start Delta works here immediately.

Rubiães and the last kilometers

The Camino continues through a forested area, rocky and considerably rougher than the first stages after Porto. You can admire enormous cork oaks during the walk. Not to mention the Aronskelken. Everywhere!

The climb to the top of the Alto de San Bento. Once at the top, you will enjoy the magnificent views of the valley of the Minho River. The river here forms the border between Spain and Portugal. With the fortified town of Valença on the Portuguese side and Tui on the Spanish side.

Valença has and massive fortress with battlements and several bastions. And includes the entire old center. It makes an impression! Whatever its purpose: it had to protect northern Portugal from the Spanish.



Valença on the Minho rivier

Via the cast-iron bridge over the Minho border river - inspired by the works of Gustave Eiffel - you reach Tui. Our terminus.



The cast iron bridge over the Minho border river

General route tips

- The route is well signposted. With yellow painted arrows.
- An easy trip with a few climbs. Up to 450 meters.
- A good walking guide is: the Rother walking guide "Camino Portugués" with reliable route descriptions, detailed hiking maps and informative elevation profiles.
- For those who care: you can request and take with you a stamp booklet to, at the end of your pilgrimage, with a full stamp booklet, to receive a kind of certificate.
- Between Valença and the Porto airport, there is a bus. Over 1.5 hours in the bus.