

NEW TRIP VIA NOVA & THE CAMINO REAL

Discovering the 1st century AD Via Nova, its legacy ... including 250 Roman milestones lining its route across mountains, hills and valleys into Galicia ... its rich heritage from the 10th century as a busy pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela: the Camino Real (pr. 'Ray-al').

ITINERARY

Day 1 After meeting at Porto airport, we travel by road (40 minutes) to Braga, where we stay at a 4* hotel, a former monastery in the old city. Late-afternoon opportunity to ascend the monumental Baroque staircase (116m/361ft – or take the funicular!) to the church of Bom Jesus, high above the city.

Day 2 We drive (20 mins), then walk to explore Citânia de Briteiros, a Bronze/Iron Age site with hill fortress, and evidence also of Roman and medieval occupation. After a picnic lunch we continue by road, then walk along the Via Nova on route to the 12th century Cistercian monastery – now a 4* hotel, where we spend two nights.

Day 3 We walk to explore the route of the Via Nova as it crosses the *Terras de Bouro* and enters the granite uplands. Optional afternoon walk through woods to visit the nearby Baroque Santuário de Nossa Senhora da Abadia.

Day 4 We drive, following the Via Nova and its Roman milestones, across the Portela do Homem (750m/2,456ft) into Spain. After walking along a valley with picturesque cascades, we continue to the 7th century Visigothic church of Santa Comba de Bande, from where we walk along the Via Nova to Aquis Querquennis – a 1st century AD Roman staging post, offering lodging for travellers – with thermal baths! As we drive (50 minutes), following the Camino Real

through Galicia, we find it joined by other pilgrim routes, including the (650-mile) Via de la Plata from Seville... and come to the magnificently situated landmark to early travellers, Monterrei. Its monastery and hospital for pilgrims is long-abandoned, but its castle – where we stay – remains. Pre-dinner wine tasting.

Day 5 We drive (15 mins) to visit the once-great, now partly ruined, monastery of Bon Jesus de Trandeiros, with its carved Romanesque façade, royal tombs, cloisters and extensive Gothic outbuildings. We then continue (20 mins) to the Monastery of San Salvador de Celanova. Founded in 936, the later impressive Benedictine complex still preserves a small Mozarabic chapel of San Miguel, dating from 942. After a visit to nearby Celanova and walk to Castromao, a Celtic site dating from the 6th century BC, we drive (20 mins), then follow the *Camino* to the delightful small town of Allariz, where we stay at a 4* spa hotel.

Day 6 A relaxing day to discover the spectacular landscapes of the Sil Valley, enjoying a boat trip passing through steep-sided vineyards of the Ribeira Sacra (DOC) vineyards and the Sil Canyon. We enjoy a tasting of Ribeira Sacra wines, and stay at the superbly situated 12th century monastery of Santo Estevo (4*).

Day 7 We drive (45 mins) to the Serra do Faro and walk to visit the architecturally

8 DAY TRIP, PORTUGAL / SPAIN

- ◆ Arrival/Departure airports: Porto/Santiago
- ◆ Fitness: Grade 2+ - 3+
- ◆ Days of walking: 5
- ◆ Shortest/longest walk: 2/4 hrs

ACCOMMODATION

NIGHT 1 Braga



Vila Galé
Collection Braga
★★★★

NIGHTS 2 & 3 Amares



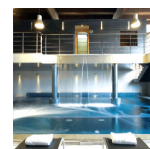
Pousada Mosteiro
de Amares
★★★★

NIGHT 4 Monterrei



Parador Castillo
de Monterrei
★★★★

NIGHT 5 Allariz



Oca Vila de
Allariz Hotel &
Spa
★★★★

NIGHT 6 Ribas de Sil



Parador de Santo
Estevo
★★★★

NIGHT 7 Santiago de Compostela



Parador Hostal dos
Reis Católicos
★★★★★

outstanding Romanesque Abbey of Oseira... then continue by road (40 mins) to Pico Sacro, from where we walk to Santiago de Compostela.

Day 8 Transfer (15 mins) to Santiago airport.

2019 DATES & PRICES

12 Jun - 19 Jun
19 Jun - 26 Jun
18 Sep - 25 Sep
2 Oct - 9 Oct
9 Oct - 16 Oct

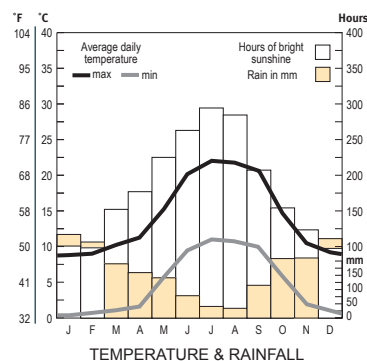
£2,795
Double-for-single
supplement
£357

Escorted 'Discovering Europe' tours: what's included? [Click here for info...](#)

WALKING THROUGH HISTORY



One of 250 remaining Roman milestones along the Via Nova



10C Benedictine monastery of San Salvador de Celanova.

FOOD & WINE

Rustic, wholesome cuisine: sumptuous stews accompanied by potatoes or rice; hearty fish and vegetable soups, often enhanced by aromatic herbs and always prepared with the best of olive oils. Fish and seafood are basic to the Portuguese cuisine and 'bacalhau' (salted cod) is still a firm favourite. The area is renowned for its interesting wines, including Ribeira Sacra which is cultivated on steep terraces along the Sil River valley, and Crego e Monaguillo from Monterrei.

TERRAIN

Roman road paths and tracks across granite landscapes.

Footnotes The Roman *Via XVIII* or *Via Nova*, constructed in the 1st century AD to connect *Bracara Augusta* (Braga in Portugal) with *Asturica Augusta* (Astorga in Spain), has remained in an exceptional state of preservation – with 250 of its original milestones still in position. This tour explores the legacy of the Roman *Via Nova*, and the rich heritage of the Camino Real, its fine monasteries, its convergence with other pilgrimage routes as it nears Santiago – and much more...



The Ribeira Sacra (Sacred River), its escarpments home to 18 monasteries.