



# ¡Caminamos!

As the new year gets into its stride now is a great opportunity for you to do the same, and you can start by planning a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella in Galicia, as millions of others have done for nearly two thousand years.

The Camino de Santiago, or more accurately, any of the several Caminos de Santiago, is no longer necessarily a religious experience but an intensely cultural and social one. Walkers can choose from a variety of routes, approaching the ancient northern Spanish city over land from Portugal, Spain, France and Italy. The Irish have a fine tradition of treading the well-worn roads leading to the imposing and beautiful cathedral which marks the end point; so much so, in fact, that one of our own most famous landmarks is associated with it: St James's Gate, the site of the original Guinness brewery in Dublin, is so named because it was

the embarkation point for Irish pilgrims who wished to make the trek.

Even though nobody expects you to run or jog the Camino, it pays to have built up at least some strength and endurance before you set out, so this is the best time of year to start to prepare. It's recommended that folks like us, who are not exactly accustomed to blazing heat, tackle the walk — which will be arduous no matter what — in Spring or Autumn, so if you fancy watching Galicia (and your embarkation country) bust into bloom while you make your way along the routes in the company of friends, strangers, or strangers who've just become friends then now is the time to build up your hiking credentials.

There are dozens of options, and remember: you don't have to do it all at once. Some people do the Camino in stages. For more information, visit [caminoways.com](http://caminoways.com).

