

**of Saint James*

The English formed the largest group of pilgrims, and so this route became known as **The English Way**. In the 1990s it was restored as a pilgrim trail. Santiago Cathedral grants the Compostela, the official pilgrimage certificate, to all those that complete the Way from A Coruña under certain conditions.



Tradition has it that the Apostle Saint James the Greater preached in the far west of the region that is today known as Galicia, and which in the 1st century CE was considered by the Romans to be the end of the world. In the 9th century a site was discovered containing what was believed to be the Apostle's tomb.

This discovery led to a surprisingly large movement of pilgrims from all over Europe throughout the Middle Ages, which resulted in the founding of the city of Santiago de Compostela and its cathedral. Many of these pilgrims travelled by sea, making the voyage from all the European countries that lined the Atlantic seaboard such as Poland, Sweden and many others.

Practically all these seafaring pilgrims sailed to the city of A Coruña, which had been founded in 1208. This was due to its proximity to Santiago, a mere 75 km away, and the wealth of services available in the port.



... by sea

Between the 13th and 17th centuries A Coruña welcomed pilgrims from numerous ports situated on Europe's Atlantic and Baltic seabords.

Sources that are conserved in countries such as the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark and Germany reveal that despite the accidents of history, for many years the number of pilgrims could be counted in their thousands. Indeed, an authentic tradition and culture of maritime pilgrimages emerged over time.

In A Coruña, the port where the pilgrims disembarked, this tradition left a lasting impression on the city's heritage, many traces of which can still be seen today. Examples include the churches of Santiago and Santa María or the former Church of San Jorge, which is no longer standing, a number of hospitals and even part of the urban layout is attributable to this tradition.



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Rúa do Parrote, 1


 The English Way runs for 6.8 km through the municipality of A Coruña. It begins at O Parrote Gate, which was traditionally used by the pilgrims arriving by sea. O Parrote Street leads straight to the Church of Santiago, where pilgrims would embrace the figure of the Apostle Saint James.

The official route continues along Santiago Street, crosses Xeneral Azcárraga

Square before turning into As Damas Street, continuing down to the small Os Anxos Square and crossing María Pita Square. It then makes its way along a succession of streets - Rego de Agua, Real, Cantón Grande and Cantón Pequeno - as far as Mina Square, with the port on the left-hand side.

The next stretch takes us along Sánchez Bregua Street, across Ourense Square and

down Linares Rivas Avenue. It continues along Alfonso Molina Avenue, Santiago Rey Fernández Latorre Street, the crossroads at Cuatro Caminos, Ramón y Cajal Street and Pérez Ardá Avenue. It then makes its way up Monelos Avenue towards the district of Eiris, from where the Way affords magnificent panoramic views over the tidal inlet of A Coruña and Santa Cristina Beach.

From Montserrat Avenue the route heads downhill into Pedralonga. After crossing Alfonso Molina Avenue, Río Quintas Street leads to O Portazgo, marking the boundary between the municipality of A Coruña and Culleredo, a borough with a long-standing pilgrimage tradition and home to the harbour of O Burgo. Sixty-eight kilometres separate this municipality from Santiago de Compostela. 

A Coruña FOR PILGRIMS

The steps of the early pilgrims in A Coruña can still be traced in the city's wealth of built heritage, forging an emotive link between modern-day pilgrims and the past. Let's find out a little about some of the principal sites.



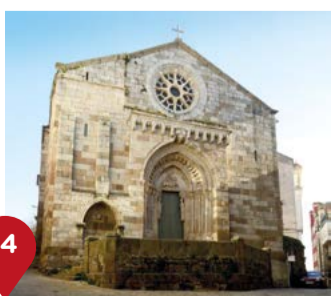
1 The Tower of Hercules
Avenida de Navarra, s/n
The legendary Roman lighthouse and landmark of the city, it was the sight the ancient European seafaring pilgrims longed to see as it announced their imminent arrival on dry land.



2 The port of O Parrote
Avda. Porto da Coruña
Situada close to the Hesperia Finisterre Hotel and today buried under concrete, O Parrote and the surrounding area was the site where the early pilgrims would disembark.



3 The port of O Parrote (promenade)
Paseo do Parrote s/n
This is the starting point of The English Way in A Coruña. In the past it was the gateway for pilgrims disembarking in The port of O Parrote. The original gate dates back to the Middle Ages, although it was rebuilt in the 17th century.



4 The church of Santiago
Rúa do Parrote, 1
Dating back to the 13th century, it was built next to the port to receive pilgrims - those who had as those about to set sail on their return voyage. As in the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, this church houses a figure of the Apostle Saint James the Greater that the pilgrims would embrace in an act of deep and moving devotion.



5 The doorway of Hospital of San Andrés
Rúa do Parrote, s/n
Dating back to the 15th century, it was moved here in 1956. It formed part of the former Hospital of San Andrés, which provided shelter for more sick and healthy pilgrims than any other of the hospitals in A Coruña.



6 The stone cross of San Andrés
San Andrés, 32
This stone cross originally belonged to the Hospital of San Andrés, which stood on this site between the 14th and 19th centuries. The pilgrim's staffs that decorate the shaft remind us of the hospital's close association with the Way of Saint James.



7 The ruins of the monastery
Access via Praza Carlos I
Here the Franciscan friars cared for pilgrims regardless of their physical condition and origin from the 13th to the 18th centuries.



8 The church of San Francisco
Avda. Calvo Sotelo, 41
A Gothic temple that was originally part of the Franciscan monastery. On its original site it held religious services for pilgrims travelling from England and other countries.



9 The monastery of Santo Domingo
Praza de Santo Domingo, 1
Various remains remind us of its medieval connections with the pilgrimage route. The current church dates back to the 18th century.



10 The convent of Santa Bárbara
Praza de Santa Bárbara
The original Gothic relief on the façade is particularly worthy of note. It depicts Saint James (the second large figure from the left) interceding on behalf of one of the pilgrims at the gate of Heaven during the Last Judgement.



11 Rúa de Santiago
Rúa de Santiago
This street has traditionally been the starting point for countless pilgrims on their journey to Santiago after visiting the church of the same name.



12 The church of San Jorge
Praza Marqués de San Martín
This 18th century church, featuring the unique Baroque style architecture of Santiago de Compostela, replaced the original medieval church that stood on Rúa Rego de Auga, a traditional starting point for English pilgrims, as it was dedicated to their patron saint (Saint George).



13 The church of San Nicolás
Rúa de San Nicolás, 18
Since the Middle Ages, the churches that have stood on this site have been dedicated to the patron saint of sailors, travellers and pilgrims. The current building dates back to the 18th century.



14 The collegiate church of Santa María do Campo
Rúa de Santa María, 1
A medieval temple that underwent several later alterations. It was a compulsory visit for pilgrims and foreign travellers who were always anxious to seek the protection of the Virgin Mary during their voyages and journeys.

