

Packing List for the Camino

Suggestions and Recommendations



Whether long or short, whether you opt for our luggage transfer add-on or not, what to pack and what to bring along are among the most crucial considerations when planning for the Camino.

In April or October, nights and early mornings can get quite frosty, so your intended time of travel will bring its own correctives into what to pack. However, whether you plan to carry your backpack or walk lightly, it is worth taking the essential pilgrim's advice to heart: less is more. A light backpack not only makes you—and the luggage transfer personal—happy, it also follows the idea of practicing how to live with less.

The list of things to take with you on the Way of Saint James given here is merely a suggestion, and it still needs to be supplemented with private items and, possibly, clothing for the time before and after the pilgrimage. If you have any questions, concerns, or would like further information, do not hesitate to ask us.

Gear and Clothing

Backpack	<p>When it comes to your backpack, quality is essential. Depending on whether you make use of the luggage transfer add-on or not, you have two options:</p> <p>Option 1, if you plan to carry your backpack: The size should be around 40 and 50 liters/11 and 13 gallons. The backpack must fit your body size and be comfortable. It is best to go to a sporting goods store and try a few on, preferably with some weight in them. Choose a backpack that fits, is adjustable, has chest and hip straps, and enough pockets that are easy to reach.</p> <p>Option 2, if you plan to opt for the luggage transfer option: Bigger backpacks are not necessary and often more of hindrance than a help. A light and easy-to-transport suitcase might be a better option. A smaller backpack for the things you need during the day along the way is sufficient. The size should be between 10+ and 25+ liters/3+ and 7+ gallons, and it should also be light, easy to carry, preferably with straps, and useful and reachable pockets (for example, for water bottles, sunscreen, et cetera). In addition, the carrying system of the backpack should be adjustable for clothes of different thicknesses.</p>
Footwear	<p>Your feet are best protected by hiking boots that cover the ankle, and those are highly recommended, particularly for the months when it is cooler, rainier, and muddier. Lighter models of below-ankle trekking shoes have become very popular, as they mostly come with a breathable but waterproof membrane. Those could be a great option in the hot summer months. If you do not already own suitable shoes, visit a sporting goods store that provides good counselling and try on different models. It is recommended to wear your hiking boots as often as possible before your trip, that is, to "wear them in." This allows your feet to get used to the shoe and build callus where needed. You should wear your shoes with the hiking socks you will bring with you. In addition, it is highly recommended to bring a pair of hiking sandals with a thick, durable outsole. Those can be worn both in the evenings as well as during the day if you have to walk through towns or other stretches of dry, flat, and easy-walking road. Switching between boots, shoes, and sandals gives your feet pleasant breaks. Sandals allow for great ventilation and can prevent blisters. Try them to find out if they are the right choice for you.</p>
Hiking socks	<p>You need at least two pairs of hiking socks for the pilgrimage. You should also buy these from a specialist shop. Good hiking socks are not necessarily cheap, but they are excellent protection against blisters and other problems during the pilgrimage. Unless you are hiking in winter, the socks should be made entirely of synthetic fiber without wool. Cotton is not suitable for sporting activities. Hiking socks also have extra padding in important places and are made without bulky seams. Wash them at least once before going on a pilgrimage.</p>
Nylon stockings (optional)	<p>Wearing nylon stocking underneath your socks might be useful to prevent blisters. In case you are prone to them, consider bringing some with you.</p>
Compression stockings (optional)	<p>Especially after a long flight, some pilgrims experience swollen legs due to the concentration of lymph in them. If you have had similar issues before, bring some compression stockings that go up to the knee.</p>



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Rainwear	Option 1: Waterproof jacket and rain protection for legs and backpack. As water could still enter your backpack, it might be necessary to additionally protect electronic devices. Some pilgrims carry an umbrella, but this makes walking harder and might not be sufficient when it is windy. Option 2: A rain poncho covers both the upper body and the backpack. This guarantees protection of everything valuable and allows for good ventilation from underneath. One disadvantage of a poncho is that it is quite bulky and makes hiking harder when it is windy. Short pants will usually be protected by the poncho. If there is heavier rain or you are wearing long trousers, it is worth wearing rain-trousers in combination with the poncho.
Jacket	Next to a raincoat or poncho, you should bring a light jacket. Windbreakers are very popular and can be combined with a fleece jacket during the colder months. Fleece jackets have proven very useful due to their light weight. If you can, purchase one that is windproof.
T-shirts, shirts	It is best to bring T-shirts and shirts without cotton (functional clothing). Two T-shirts and one long sleeve shirt should be sufficient. Special outdoor wear is usually made from synthetic fibers and has the advantage of drying faster, being breathable, and light.
Underwear	Sport underwear should also be without cotton content, which keeps the skin dry.
Hiking trousers	It is best to bring one or two pairs of walking trousers, also made from synthetic fibers. Zip-off trousers are popular with many pilgrims, as they allow to quickly adapt to changing temperatures.
Feel-good pants (optional)	Light jogging trousers or similar to relax after hiking.
Swimwear (optional)	If necessary, and if your travel takes place in the months when you can also swim outdoors.
Hat or cap	Especially in the hot months, a hat or cap is essential to be protected from the sun.
Scarf, beanie, gloves	For the early morning hours on the Way of Saint James, these can come in handy, especially in higher altitudes in the months of April and October when it can get quite chilly at night.

Daily Equipment

Water bottle	Many pilgrims prefer a hydration pack to bottles, as it allows them to drink without stopping to take out the bottle. There are many different options for these packs as well as a variety of bottles, some of which can be folded to save space or be attached to your belt. Find out what suits you best. Alternatively, bottled water can be bought along the Camino.
Personal hygiene items	Tooth brush, tooth paste, shampoo, deodorant, et cetera, preferably in compact, travel sizes (you can always restock on any of these items during the Camino).
Sunglasses	For protection from the sun. Do not forget a protective case and a cloth to clean your glasses.
Sunscreen	With a high protection factor for longer pilgrimages under the sun.
Deer tallow/foot cream	To rub your feet with before and possibly during the walking day. It helps prevent blisters.
Sewing kit (optional)	A small sewing kit (with strong thread) for minor repairs to clothing and backpack.
Pocket knife	Ideally with an integrated corkscrew. Do not take it with you in your hand luggage when flying.
Ziplock bags/protective cover (optional)	For documents and for the pilgrim passport.
Mobile phone	Depending on your country of origin and the duration of your stay in Europe, you can consider looking into getting a pre-paid European SIM card. Do not forget to bring a charger.
Photo camera (optional)	Do not forget spare batteries and a charger.
Walking poles/stick	Simple walking sticks made from wood can be purchased almost anywhere on the Camino and are very useful. For anybody who experiences problems with their knees or feet, trekking poles are a great relief. They should be adjustable in length. If you take a hiking pole with you on the trail, they often have a so-called rubber stopper at the end. We recommend you take these with you in any case—and also a spare pair—, as they also provide additional cushioning.
Tissue/paper towels/wet wipes (optional)	Paper handkerchiefs, also for the inevitable “in-between business.”
Keepsake/amulet (optional)	Something dear to your heart, from your home and your loved ones.
Stone (optional)	Possibly take a stone from home with you to accompany you on the Way of Saint James and/or to leave at the “Iron Cross” (Cruz de Ferro) if your Camino takes you past it.
Emergency provisions	Non-perishable provisions for emergencies, for example, cereal bars, dried fruit, or dextrose.
Seat (optional)	A pad for breaks along the way.



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Other

Documents	Do not forget to bring the most important documents: Photo ID, passport, driver's license, credit cards, and insurance documents. It is advisable to bring essential medical information with you on the trip. This includes your blood-type, telephone numbers of your treating doctor, and relevant conditions. It is also useful to have the most important addresses from friends and family with you if you want to write postcards. For travel documents: Flight/train/bus bookings with reference codes and/or reservation numbers.
Glasses	If you wear glasses, you should bring a second pair, just in case.
Hair drier	Some accommodations may not have hair driers.
Towel	It is always useful to have a small towel with you.
Medicine and first-aid kit	Prescription medications (if any) and a note with personal medical details (blood group, telephone number of family doctor, special illnesses such as diabetes). If you use prescription medicine, check with your doctor to discuss your travel plans as well as possible emergency plans, for example, what to do if your medicine supply becomes misplaced, damaged or lost, how to go about getting replacement supply, et cetera. Patches and disinfectant spray are the most important items in your kit. It further makes sense to bring painkillers, ointment against cramps and pain, magnesium for muscle pain, and something against bowel complaints. Balm for sore feet can be useful and deer tallow has proven to be especially effective against blisters.
Journal	If you want to keep a diary of your Way of Saint James.
Writing utensils	For postcards and/or a diary.
Pilgrimage guidebook	Pilgrimage guidebook with further, detailed information about the Way of Saint James.
Detergent	In a travel-size pack, approximately 50 – 100 grams/2 – 4 ounces, it can come in handy for washing hiking socks, for example. Laundry can be done in washing machines widely available at most lodging locations.
Clothesline	Approximately 3 – 4 meters/10 – 13 feet of sturdy, light cord for drying clothes and for other "improvisations" during the pilgrimage.
Safety pins	Always useful. They can also be used as clothes pegs.
Flashlight (optional)	A small flashlight or headlamp can come in handy.
Earplugs (optional)	A proven remedy on the Way of Saint James against noises at night, if you are a light sleeper, the accommodation is located in a busy city, or the guesthouse has thin walls.



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