

#CAPECAMINO

WALK *your* WAY

THE “ORIGINAL” CAMINO - THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO - IS A HIGHWAY OF ANCIENT AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE THAT SPANS 780KM ACROSS SPAIN AND FRANCE. THE CAPE CAMINO - SOUTH AFRICA’S ANSWER FOR FREE-SPIRITED JOURNEYMEN - IS AN UNFOLDING OF DYNAMIC ROUTES, SACRED SPACES AND ENTERPRISING HOSTS. THE ROUTE BEGINS IN THE WINELANDS OF WELLINGTON, RIEBEEK KASTEEL AND TULBAGH - ALTHOUGH YOU CAN START FROM ANY POINT YOU CHOOSE. **STORY BY GUY HAWTHORNE**



THE CAPE CAMINO... currently makes up a total distance of approximately 650km.



A camino means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. To some, it is a walk of solitude during which you'll have time to contemplate, and grow, and to think deeply about your own life's challenges. To others it's simply a walk during which time the troubles of modern-day life are forgotten. Wonderful things can happen on this life-cleansing road of aesthetic wonder - a time to appreciate nature and revel in the massive expanses of solitude and beauty....



An adventurous spirit is the guiding force for many of the pilgrims along the Camino. Not knowing where they're going to sleep, what the weather will be like, or what to pack, makes the Camino a true pilgrimage of faith.



The routes offered on the Cape Camino are varied and flexible. Walkers can join the route from almost any overnight stop along the way. I was going to sample a small taste of what the Cape Camino was all about, so I made my way to Gouda - a one street town outside of Tulbagh, 150km

from Cape Town. My 3-night mini Camino was going to be my own little journey of wonder - to see what I could gain from walking in solitude. With my car parked safely until my return, I was shown to my room where I packed what was needed for the next day's walk, The rest of my luggage was

transported to my next destination I ate dinner with my hosts and given insight into what lay ahead of me.

Each day's walk is hosted and so the next morning I was guided along the trail to Tulbagh... and so began my pilgrimage.

I can't share my person journey

because it was just that. Personal. As it will be for each individual.

From community hostels to 5-Star farm stays, from first-time home-stay hosts to seasoned professional hosts, the journey will take you to overnight stops that will humble and amaze. But it's the days inbetween that are the



real experience. The walking does the talking...

WHY DO A CAMINO? 1. SPIRITUAL REASONS

The Camino was historically a religious pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James and today many people (about 25%) still walk for



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a religious or spiritual reason. While not necessarily Catholic, many pilgrims walk to connect and discover a deeper meaning in life, to spiritually connect with nature or themselves, or walk to find answers to deep questions.

2. EXERCISE AND WELL-BEING Another popular reason to walk the Camino is for the physical effort and challenge the Camino provides. The majority of people have little to no experience in walking long distances over many days. One of the exciting parts of the Camino is getting ready to take on this challenge and instantly becoming part of a community.

A popular saying is “Your Camino begins when you sign up”. So even

if you’re not walking any time soon, your Camino has already begun. You begin to research what shoes to bring, how to train, learning about what you should pack and practicing walking with a backpack. You are already doing research on Facebook and reading blogs about the Camino. You are now part of an exclusive group of Camino walkers and this helps you prepare for your journey and stay motivated.

Many people, through training, become healthier and more fit preparing for the trip.

If you’re not accustomed to sustained exercise before the Camino, you will be quickly amazed at how your body is able to walk long distances day after day.

While the walking can be tiring, the beauty of the surrounds, the people you meet as you walk, and the amazing landmarks make the journey fun and it passes quickly.

3. ADVENTURE Walking the Camino isn’t your typical holiday. You aren’t going somewhere to rest and relax. Many pilgrims say it’s the vacation they didn’t know they needed. What the Camino lacks in amenities, it makes up for in adventure, authenticity, and a spirit of the unknown.

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4. DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT

In a world of busyness with too many obligations and long workdays, many of us have become disconnected and disillusioned. We all say we would love to disconnect for a bit, but typical getaways are anything but. Answering e-mails at the pool or watching the news after dinner, we seem never to have the opportunity to truly “get away from it all”.

The Camino is a simple way to reconnect with your inner self and

understand yourself better.

At first it may seem strange to not constantly think about what’s going on in your country, or not check your phone every 15 minutes but soon you find a peace and silence in the journey. It may take a few days to adjust to the ways of the Camino, but the reward is clarity and a feeling of peace that you will find revealing. Many say the Camino is as much a mental/inner journey as it is a physical journey.

This disconnection is so powerful that after walking the Camino people are moved to make changes in the way they live their lives and almost everyone vows to walk some parts of Camino again.

5. FUN

While the Camino provides a great way to disconnect from daily stress, many just walk for fun. And the Cape Camino is fun!

Some routes are strewn with shops for you to grab a coffee or a beer. Other pilgrims are friendly and lively, and the scenery is beautiful. After walking you’ll often find yourself hanging out with other pilgrims, chatting about the day’s walk.

If you decide to book/walk alone, you can rest assured that you’ll make new friends along the way.

You may even make a lifelong friend.

No matter what your own personal reason is for walking the Cape Camino, we hope you will find what you are looking for. 🌍

