



The pilgrimage route to Santiago

In the year 813, in Galicia, a hermit discovered the tomb of Saint James the Elder. James (Santiago in Spanish) the Apostle came to Spain, on a long ministry to evangelize the northern part of the Iberian peninsula. Later he was beheaded in Palestine and his body was placed in a stone boat which miraculously set sail with no pilot, reaching the Galician coast. After many vicissitudes, the body was buried on mount Librédon. Little by little all was forgotten until a bright star shone, guiding the hermit to the field where the saint was buried.

With this lovely legend, it is no wonder the Apostle's tomb has become a sacred goal of the Christian religion. Santiago de Compostela attracted an incessant flow of pilgrims from all over the world, who wanted to follow the route of the stars of the Milky Way to secure forgiveness for their sins.

The road to Santiago has been declared a World Heritage Site, and in addition to spiritual significance, it holds historic values, such as having been the backbone of European cultural unity. The routes to Santiago de Compostela started out in Sweden, Poland, the Netherlands, Ireland, Great Britain, and Turkey, and all of them merged in France. The Pyrenees mountain chain is the real starting point of the journey. The European pilgrimage routes converge in the mountain passes in Navarre (Orreaga-Roncesvalles) and in Aragón (Somport). The two routes join at Puente la Reina and continue on as a single road to Galicia.



Santiago de Compostela

Santiago de Compostela is the final destination of the adventure. This lovely thousand-year old city is the deserving goal and reward for the hardships endured on Europe's most legendary pilgrimage.

(Adapted from *The Road to Santiago*, Turespaña)

ACTIVITIES

1 Answer the following questions.

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| 1 Who was Saint James? | 3 Where do the routes start? |
| 2 Why does the road to Santiago hold historic values? | 4 Where do the routes become a single road? |

2 Find synonyms for the following terms in the text above.

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|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Find (v) | 7 Target |
| 2 Shore | 8 Meaning |
| 3 Gradually | 9 Way |
| 4 Myth | 10 Come together (v) |
| 5 Doubt | 11 Renowned |
| 6 Brilliant | 12 Nonstop |