



How you receive your Compostela



- Finish your walk at the Cathedral You must have completed at least the final 100 km on foot (or 200 km by bike) on an official Camino route.
- Go to the Pilgrim's Office The Oficina de Acogida al Peregrino is a short walk from the cathedral. Enter, follow the guidance to the computers, input your details, receive your queue number, and make your way to the main waiting area.
- Present your Credencial Hand over your pilgrim passport with all the stamps (sellos) collected along the way. Staff will check:
 - Your route
 - Your dates
 - That you've completed the minimum qualifying distance
- Fill in a short form You'll be asked for your name, nationality, starting point, and your motivation for walking (spiritual, religious, or cultural).
- Receive your Compostela You'll be given the traditional certificate, handwritten in Latin, confirming your completion of the Camino.
- Optional: Distance Certificate For a small fee, you can also receive a certificate showing the exact kilometres you walked. Protective tubes are available for a small additional cost to keep your Compostela safe.





The Meaning of Buen Camino



“Buen Camino” is the traditional greeting shared by pilgrims along the routes to Santiago de Compostela. Literally translated as “Good Camino” or “Have a good journey,” it carries a deeper cultural meaning that reflects the spirit of the pilgrimage.

Pilgrims use the phrase to encourage one another, acknowledge the shared experience, and offer a moment of kindness on the road. Whether spoken when passing someone on the trail, leaving an albergue, or arriving in a village, “Buen Camino” is a reminder that every walker is part of a larger community.

The greeting expresses goodwill, solidarity, and respect. It recognises the personal reasons each pilgrim has for walking — spiritual, cultural, reflective, or simply adventurous. For many, hearing “Buen Camino” becomes a comforting rhythm of the journey, a small but meaningful connection repeated day after day.

More than a phrase, “Buen Camino” symbolises the openness and generosity that define the pilgrimage. It is a simple wish that your path be safe, your steps steady, and your journey fulfilling.





The Botafumeiro



The Botafumeiro is one of the most famous symbols of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. This giant thurible, made of silver-plated brass and suspended from the cathedral's high vaults, is used to fill the basilica with incense during special ceremonies. It is one of the largest thuribles in the world, weighing around 80 kg when filled.

The tradition dates back to the Middle Ages, when incense was used to purify the air inside the cathedral and mask the smell of arriving pilgrims who had walked for weeks. Today, the Botafumeiro is no longer used for hygiene but remains a powerful ritual, symbolising purification, celebration, and the spiritual significance of completing the Camino.

During the ceremony, eight specially trained attendants known as tiraboleiros pull on ropes to swing the Botafumeiro across the transept. At full height, it reaches speeds of over 60 km/h, soaring almost to the ceiling in a dramatic arc that has become one of the most iconic sights in Santiago.

The Botafumeiro is not used at every Mass. It appears on major feast days, special pilgrim celebrations, and occasionally when sponsored by groups. When it does swing, it is considered one of the most memorable moments of a pilgrim's journey – a powerful, emotional finale to reaching Santiago.

