



Day 9 between Santo Domingo & Redecilla

# Our Camino de Compostela



by Steven & Jane from Gordon NSW, Australia - The Pilgrim's Way, June 2017

"The experience of the Pilgrim's Trail tour exceeded expectations on so many levels. The fine dining experience at Hotel Ithurria in Ainhoa in the Pays Basque of south-western France was truly memorable with Michelin star food and an excellent wine list that also featured local Irouléguy wines, and a range of fine Armagnacs.



Fields of wheat to the left and grape vines to the right. Classic Rioja!

At the same time the dining in the restaurants of the Parador Hotels and the Pousada De Portomarin was very good - tasty, regional, and sustaining after a day's trekking. Special mention is deserved for the dining experience in the city of Leon at Restaurante Bodega Regia, where a sumptuous 6 course meal of traditional rustic cuisine was enjoyed.

It was wonderful sampling the local delicacies such as the Gateau Basque from Le Moulin de Bassilour, freshly grilled sardines in St Jean de Luz, the salami, ham, crusty bread at Venta Berrouet on the France - Spain border, tapas in

Pamplona, the verdejo and rioja wines at Marques de Riscal, and the high quality / low cost cafe con leche throughout Spain.

The history of the route of the El Camino Pilgrim's Trail is fascinating, combining ruins from Roman times, through relicts of the Middle Ages to the amazing architecture, art, and significance of the cathedrals of Pamplona, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, Burgos, Leon, and Santiago de Compostela. And the detour to the walled stone town perched on a mountain top, Sos del Ray Catolico (the birthplace of King Ferdinand, father of Catherine of Aragon) was truly worthwhile.

Many guests of the Gourmet Walkabout Pilgrim's Tour will have remarked on the scenery - spectacular views from the foothills of the Pyrenees looking over Pays Basque to the Bay of Biscay, bu-



Gnarled Grape Vines from Day 8



Day 13 between Sarria and Ferreiros

colic scenes of well-fed cattle in lush pastures, wild ponies, gnarled grape vines of Rioja and Navarro, fields of grain swaying in the breeze and tall poplars standing guard beside local roads in La Maragateria de Astorgia, to the Galician slate villages and green moss covered trails on the way to Portomarin. Scenery so visually pleasing that it was easy to forget that we were walking significant kilometres of the El Camino.

The variety of sections of the El Camino selected by Graeme provided a thorough introduction to the trail. Indeed Graeme's detailed knowledge of its history, of its topography, of its sites, and of the cuisines and wines of the regions we traversed, added colour and context to everything we did. Significantly Graeme's wide-ranging conversation, conviviality, good humour and hospitality enhanced our overall enjoyment of the experience."