

President's report – 19th to 25th March

How exciting to walk the most popular Camino pilgrimage route in Spain the Camino Frances. This route starts in St Jean Pied de Port, France. It is the busiest and best-supported route and Santiago de Compostela, Spain is the destination.

Our guest speaker, Dr John Montagner said "there are many Camino routes; you can walk, cycle, or even ride these walking paths, but most pilgrims walk". John's talk was one to inspire us to walk the Camino De Santiago and to be helpful by passing on his experiences

What walking gear would be needed and how fit a pilgrim had to be before setting out. The Camino de Santiago is for everyone, young, old, fit, unfit, religious or otherwise. Preparation for the walk was essential and that starts at home.

One of the greatest of many bits of advice from John was to walk for a number of weeks prior to leaving. This included walking with the backpack and walking shoes, to get the body ready for the Camino De Santiago. It takes about a week to settle into the walk once you start.

Keep in mind that you may not be used to carrying so much stuff in your bag for many hours. Your body may not be familiar with walking 20-30 km a day. John suggested to carry on your back about 10% of your body weight

Start early and finish your days walk by 2:30pm and to walk your own rhythm. John said "you can buy your breakfast, lunch and water on the Camino and if there is something essential missing, there are small village shops along the way.

John said "for over a thousand years travellers have been crossing Spain to visit the sacred tomb of St James, the "Camino" or "way" has developed into one of the world's most sought after walking treks". The number of walkers is increasing each year.

John showed many photos from his digital photo collections. The Camino, passes through the same villages, crosses the same rivers, visits the same chapels, churches, cathedrals and other monuments as did the path taken by our predecessors in centuries gone by.

John said "what makes this adventure so special and a trip of a lifetime are the people you meet, the places you visit, the history, the stories you share and the challenges you overcome". Thank you Dr John Montagner for sharing your travelling experiences.

