

The best of Santiago

The Cathedral, along with the squares surrounding it (Obradoiro, Quintana, Inmaculada and Praterías) and the main historic “rúas” or streets are a must for first-time visitors. However, there are other gems that should not be overlooked by tourists.

Old Town... 31

San Domingos de Bonaval and San Pedro... 33

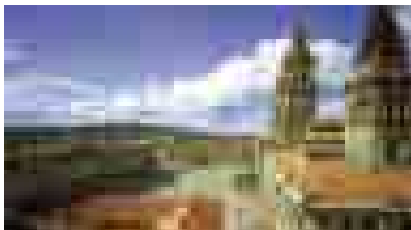
Other Santiagos ... 34

Old Town

La Cathedral and its four squares Europe's richest cathedral site

The site made up of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela and its four squares (Obradoiro, Quintana, Praterías and Inmaculada) is one of the most interesting and richest in Europe. A whole world of historic and artistic content, spiritual meaning and religious symbolism. The Cathedral is the heart and soul of the city. A baroque building with a Romanesque heart, whose crypt houses the remains of the Apostle James, its most renowned feature is the “Pórtico de la Gloria”, the best finished and most complex group of sculptures belonging to Romanesque art.

Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela d2
Open daily from 7.30 am to 9 pm.
www.catedraldesantiago.es



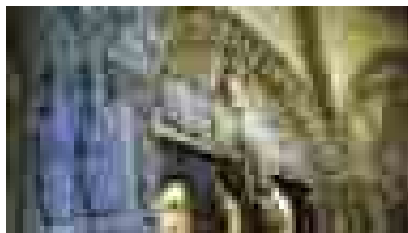
Cathedral Roofs

Very close to the heavens

The visit to the Cathedral's stone roofs, apart from its great historic-artistic value, gives us one of the best views of the city's rooftops: from there we can see all of the monumental buildings in relation to the rest of the city. What we cannot see, for once, is the Cathedral itself, which is changed from a landmark to a citadel dominating the entire city.

Visit to the Cathedral Roofs

Location: Entrance via Pazo de Xelmírez, Praza do Obradoiro d2
Open: 10 am to 2 pm and 4 to 8 pm. Every day.
Prices: €10 general; €8 OAPs, students and pilgrims
Contact: Cathedral Museum.
Tel: (+34) 981 55 29 85
www.catedraldesantiago.es



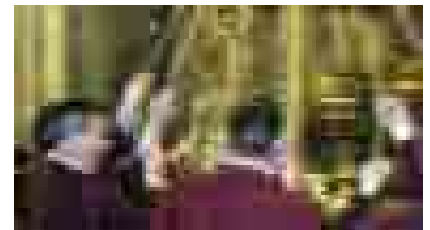
The “Botafumeiro”

The biggest censer in the world

The Cathedral of Santiago's “Botafumeiro” is unique. Seeing this giant censer, considered the largest in the world, propelled by 8 men called *tiraboleiros*, flying above the basilica naves and almost touching the vault, is a truly awe-inspiring spectacle. The “Botafumeiro” censer usually functions every day in Holy Years (see p. 67) during the Pilgrim Mass (12 noon). In non-holy years, it functions during special liturgical services and occasionally, whenever it has been requested and arranged. When it is not in use, both the “Botafumeiro” and its solid silver replica, are on display in the Cathedral Museum.

In order to request its functioning, please apply to:

Contact: Oficina de Acogida de Peregrinos (Pilgrim Reception Office) d2
Rúa do Vilar, 1
Tel: (+34) 981 56 24 19 / (+34) 981 58 35 48 (9 am-9 pm)
www.archicompostela.org/Peregrinos
oficina.peregrinos@planalfa.es



Visiting Santiago

Pazo de Xelmírez and Cathedral Museum

Archbishop Xelmírez's palace (12th c.) is a gem of civil Romanesque art. The tour includes its old kitchens and magnificent synodal hall.

The same ticket entitles you to visit the Cathedral Museum's other areas: the Renaissance cloister, the chapterhouse, the library, where the "Botafumeiro" is displayed; the Treasury, the relics chapel and the royal pantheon, the tapestry collection (with sketches by Rubens and Goya, among others), rooms displaying archaeological pieces from the basilica's subsoil, the crypt of the "Pórtico de la Gloria" and the stone choir (both from the 12th c.). An extensive look at the history and art of this essential world cultural centre.

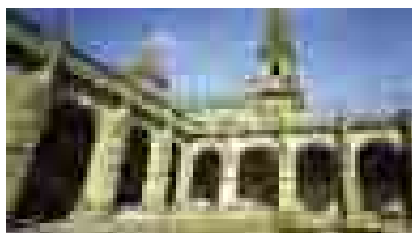
Location: Entrance via Praza do Obradoiro. **d2**
Open: June 1-September 30: 10 am-2 pm and 4-8 pm. Sunday and public holidays: 10 am-2 pm. October 1-May 31: 10 am-1.30 pm and 4-6.30 pm. Sunday and public holidays: 10 am-1.30 pm. Closed January 1 and 6, July 25, August 15, December 25.

Price: €5. Students, groups, over-65s and pilgrims: €1.50. Schoolchildren: €1 (groups and schoolchildren, booking in advance). Under-12s: free.

Contact: Cathedral Museum

Tel: (+34) 981 56 05 27

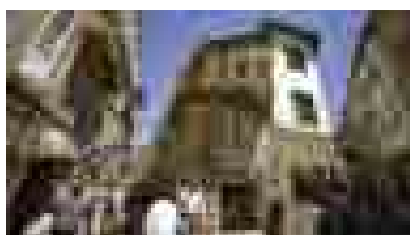
www.catedraldesantiago.es



Historic squares and "rúas" (streets)

The old town is a stone forest full of religious and university monuments, stately "pazos" (palaces) and small houses, balconies and galleries overlooking busy stone "rúas" with sections of arcades.

Although it is highly recommended to wander about without a fixed route, there are some "rúas" that should not be missed: the two most "stately" ones, Rúa do Vilar and Ruá Nova; O Franco and A Raíña, full of restaurants and wine bars; the itinerary made up of Orfas-Caldeireria-Preguntoiro, which ends in Plaza de Cervantes and is lined with shops, including several traditional ones; and Casas Reais, Algalia de Arriba and Algalia de Abaixo, and the singular Plaza de San Mariño Pinario. **d2, d3, e2, e3**



Mercado de Abastos (food market)

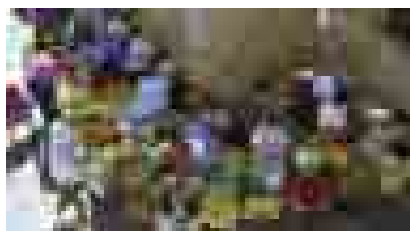
The Mercado de Abastos is Santiago's second-most visited attraction after the Cathedral. It is the city's main market, and most genuine and traditional one; it is a "rural" market but with all the modern services, featuring the gastronomy and culinary customs of Galicia: this large city ladder contains countless kinds of fresh fish and seafood, as well as fruit, vegetables, flowers, cheese, etc, with the added interest of being housed in a monumental building. The Mercado de Abastos is truly exceptional.

Guided tour of the Mercado de Abastos: see Gastronomy Tour in Compostela Walking Tours, p. 35

Location: Rúa das Ameas, s/n (no number)

Open: Monday to Saturday, 7 am to 3 pm approx. The busiest time is from 11 am to 12 noon, and the best days are Thursday and Saturday. **d3-e3**

Contact: www.mercadodeabastosdesantiago.com



Monastery and Church of San Martiño Pinario - Museum

San Martiño Pinario was the most influential and largest of Galicia's Benedictine monasteries, and the second in size in all Spain after El Escorial. Its church stands out among those in the city due to its impressive baldachin and the stalls in its choir (the upper choir is Renaissance from the 17th century and used to belong to the Cathedral). Furthermore, different rooms display its collection of paintings, sculptures, gold and silver articles, archaeological remains, etc, as well as objects related to the everyday life of the monks that inhabited it: its press, pharmacy and the monastery's former natural history laboratory.

Guided tour of this and other important churches: see Church Tour in Compostela Walking Tours, p. 36

Location: Praza da Inmaculada, 5 **d2**

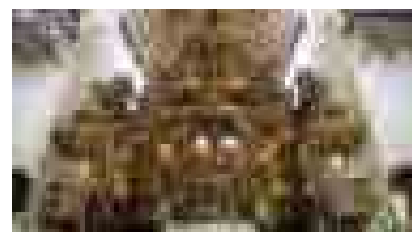
Open: Tuesday to Sunday, 11 am-1.30 pm and 4-6.30 pm (closed Monday); July and August, every day from 11 am-7 pm.

Price: €2.50. Students, groups and over-65s: €1.50.

Contact: San Martiño Pinario Museum

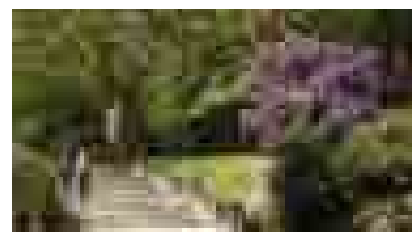
Tel: (+34) 981 583 008

www.museosanmartinpinario.com



Parque da Alameda

This romantic 19th-century park features the best viewpoint overlooking the city: the one in Paseo da Ferradura, which offers a spectacular, panoramic front view of the Cathedral, which stands out magnificently over the cluster of historic buildings. Recommendable at any time of day, this viewpoint is a must in the evening. **c2**



Colexio de Fonseca

This Renaissance building, originally designed as a boarding school, marked the beginning of Santiago University, one of the oldest in Spain. It is now used to house exhibitions, a library and other University services; you can visit the courtyard, Gothic chapel and old refectory, whose coffered ceiling stands out.

Guided tour of this and other monumental University buildings: see p. 37

Location: Rúa do Franco, s/n (no number) d2

Open: 9 am to 9 pm.

Price: admission free.

Contact: "Oficina de Congresos" (Congress Office) of the USC. Tel: (+34) 981 55 46 96
www.usc.es/universidadeviva



Churches, convents and monasteries

In the Middle Ages, numerous churches and chapels began to appear around the Apostle's basilica, as well as convents and monasteries belonging to the West's main religious order: Benedictines, Franciscans, Dominicans, nuns of St. Claire, Carmelites, Jesuits, Augustinians, Mercedarians, etc.

Some of the most outstanding churches are San Paio, San Martiño, San Francisco, San Fructuoso, Ánimas, the secularised church of San Domingos de Bonaval, etc.

Guided tour of the main churches or enclosed convents: see Compostela Walking Tours, p. 36.

** Church hours are available in Santiago Tourism Offices (see p. 4).

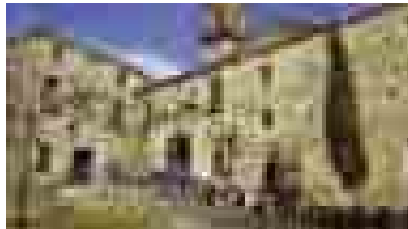


San Domingos de Bonaval and San Pedro

The neighbourhoods of San Domingos de Bonaval and San Pedro make up a very interesting, picturesque area: culture, art, history, scenery and popular tradition, with the added charm that the latest in urban design has been introduced here, by means of the architecture of the CGAC and the impeccable intervention in Bonaval Park.

Convent of San Domingos de Bonaval and Museo do Pobo Galego (MPG)

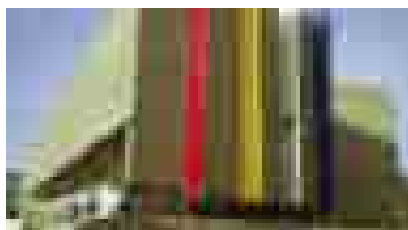
The MPG is Galicia's ethnographic museum and includes rooms devoted to the sea, the countryside, traditional trades, traditional architecture... Housed in the former Dominican convent of Bonaval (13th c.), it also features other attractions: the secularised Gothic church, the cloister and an impressive triple spiral stairway, a masterpiece of baroque art. Free guided tours in Spanish and English (consult times). More info on p. 39.



CGAC

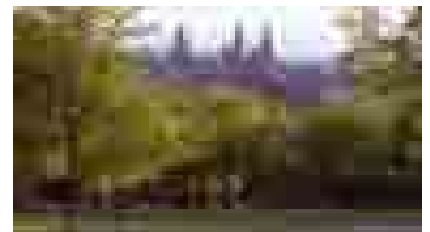
Lovers of the latest tendencies in contemporary art should not miss this museum, which is also a small gem of architectural design by Portugal's Álvaro Siza. Free guided tours, interesting workshops for the young and old, book shop and cafeteria-restaurant. More info on p. 39. e3

Guided tour of this and other interesting contemporary architectures: see Compostela Walking Tours, p. 36.



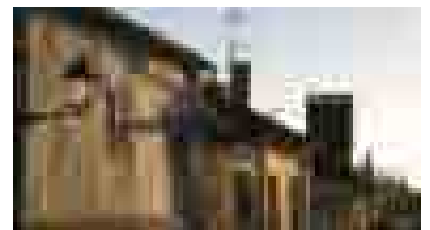
Parque de San Domingos de Bonaval

This park, located on the grounds of the old Dominican convent, is a monument per se, which has preserved all the essence of its past: the monks' small garden of aromatic herbs still exists, the same as the old fountains and channels, even the former cemetery, which has been completely integrated into the park. The landscape project that turned these convent grounds into a city park is the work, along with the CGAC, of Álvaro Siza. And on top of all of this, it also offers matchless views of the old town. f3



San Pedro neighbourhood

This neighbourhood, which is called after its main street, is one of Santiago's oldest and most traditional: it coincides with the last section of the Way of St. James, along which pilgrims travel before coming to "Porta do Camiño", the site of the former city wall. The neighbourhood's streets have preserved their peaceful, traditional atmosphere, as well as their typical houses, old shops and bars, which have recently been joined by numerous restaurants. e3-f3



Visiting Santiago

Other Santiagos

Santiago is a lot more than just its historic city centre. Beyond the former city wall and conventional tourist itineraries, there are other areas full of sites to be discovered: from outstanding monuments to picturesque traditional streets, passing through designer buildings or appealing boutiques.

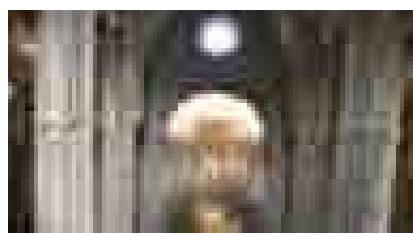
Belvís neighbourhood: "beautiful view"

The name Belvís seems to come from "bella vista" or "beautiful view", which is what you get from here: a magnificent panoramic view of the old town, especially in the evening. But the neighbourhood is also the home of an enclosed convent belonging to Dominican nuns, one of the city's best known and most popular: not only because of the "Virgen del Portal" sanctuary, which has been highly venerated for a long time, but also because of the delicious sweets made by the nuns, which can be bought inside the convent. The neighbourhood is reached by crossing Belvís Park: a kind of natural trench turned into an interesting park. The architecture of the A Trisca socio-cultural centre, designed by New York's John Hejduk, is another of this historic Compostela neighbourhood's attractions. **d4, e3, e4**



Collegiate Church of Sar, Romanesque miracle

Located on the banks of the small Sar River, the Collegiate Church (Romanesque, 12th c.) is unique due to its sloping walls and columns, a construction defect that is especially noticeable inside. This has turned the building into a rarity as well as an architectural miracle, comparable to the tower of Pisa. Its Romanesque cloister also features a small collection that can be visited. The museum's opening hours are on p. 40. **c5**



Contemporary Architecture: auteur buildings and designer urban development

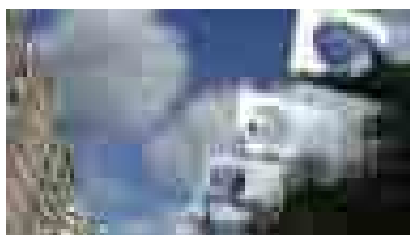
The singularity and charm of Santiago has been increasing throughout time with the combination and superimposition of styles from different periods. New city projects, designed by internationally renowned architects, have enriched even more this accumulative image defining the city: John Hejduk, Josef Paul Kleihues, Álvaro Siza, Manuel Gallego Jorroto, Giorgio Grassi, Alberto Noguero, Jean Nouvel, Andrés Perea, Arata Isozaki, Peter Eisenman or César Portela are only some of the names that have left their mark on the city.

Guided tour of the city's main contemporary architectures: see Compostela Walking Tours, p. 36.



Ensanche: Santiago's new town

This is the name given to the city's large urban expansion area, built from 1950 onwards. It is a very lively district, with all kinds of services, an interesting concentration and range of shops (especially fashion, particularly Galician fashion, from Zara to Galicia's important designers), cafés, bars, restaurants, cinemas, etc. The Galician Parliament is located on one of its main streets, Calle Hórreo. **b3, c3**



Viewpoints in the parks: the best panoramic views

The city's rolling relief facilitates the existence of a series of natural viewpoints, most of which have the added charm of being located in beautiful green zones. Apart from the classic parks (such as the Alameda, Campus Sur, San Domingos de Bonaval, Belvís...), there are other, lesser-known ones: the Almaciga, Monte Pio (Galeras Park), Granxa do Xesto, Eugenio Granell Park, Carlomagno Park... and magnificent urban balconies, such as the one at the top of the street called Costa Vella.

