

# North of Portugal

The Way of Saint James as an Outdoor Classroom  
Teaching through Cultural Heritage



Pedagogical  
Innovation  
Centre

**Course Duration:** one week, from Monday to Saturday, 30 hours

**Location:** North of Portugal

**Number of Participants:** Min. 6 – Max. 20



## COURSE DESCRIPTION

**Route:** Porto > Barcelos > Balugães > Ponte de Lima > Rubiães > Gandra > Valença > Tui (Spain)

**Required equipment:** Sporty clothes, shoes, a notebook and a personal computer

This Erasmus+ course invites educators to walk, reflect, and learn along one of Europe's most emblematic heritage routes: the Portuguese Way of Saint James. Combining place-based learning, storytelling, and cultural immersion, the course offers an experiential approach to heritage education grounded in holistic, reflective pedagogy.

Over six days, participants will explore how cultural and natural landscapes, traditions, and historical narratives can serve as powerful educational tools for fostering identity, empathy, sustainability, environmental awareness, and a sense of European belonging. Walking through rural and urban contexts allows educators to reconnect with local knowledge, slow learning, and the transformative power of the journey.

### Course Methodology:

The course follows a mobile, reflective, and participatory approach:

- **Walking-Based Learning:** Daily walking stages offer immersive experiences in cultural and natural heritage, enabling embodied learning and mindful observation.
- **Place-Based Education:** Each stop becomes a classroom: towns, trails, bridges, churches, and customs offer entry points for dialogue and creative interpretation.
- **Storytelling & Narrative Inquiry:** Local legends, pilgrims' stories, and participants' reflections connect personal experience with broader cultural and historical contexts.
- **Reflection Circles & Journaling:** Structured group reflection and creative journaling enhance integration of insights and peer learning.
- **Design Challenges:** Participants work individually or in teams to create educational proposals inspired by the heritage and stories experienced along the route.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

### Participants to the course will learn to:

- Understand the principles and value of heritage education in contemporary teaching
- Apply place-based and experiential learning methodologies in their own contexts
- Use walking and storytelling as tools for engagement, reflection, and memory
- Design educational activities inspired by cultural landmarks, traditions, and local history
- Foster intercultural dialogue, identity-building, environmental awareness, and sustainability through heritage themes

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## Day 1

### Monday – Porto > Barcelos (Train + Walk)

- Welcome circle and course overview in Porto
- Train to Barcelos (~1h15)
- Walking tour: symbols of pilgrimage, local legends, and urban heritage
- Introduction to heritage education and the pedagogy of walking
- Pilgrim passport distribution and journal set-up

## Day 2

### Tuesday – Barcelos > Balugães (~12.5 km)

- Rural walking stage through fields and chapels
- Workshop: What is heritage? Tangible vs. intangible elements
- Group challenge: photo walk and cultural sketching
- Reflection circle and local dinner experience

## Day 3

### Wednesday – Balugães > Ponte de Lima (~15.9 km)

- Walking through nature and rural hamlets
- Journaling prompt: learning through silence and observation
- Arrival in Ponte de Lima – Portugal's oldest village
- Cultural activity: Roman bridge, local legends, and evening riverside session

## Day 4

### Thursday – Ponte de Lima > Rubiães (~13.6 km)

- Hilly terrain and forest paths
- Mid-day storytelling activity: "Voices of the Way"
- Workshop: challenges as opportunities in education
- Group journaling and creative session

## Day 5

### Friday – Rubiães > Gandra (~9 km)

- Shorter stage for deeper engagement
- Workshop in nature: designing learning activities with local heritage
- Peer exchange of pedagogical ideas and practices
- Journaling and team time to prepare final presentations

## Day 6

### Saturday – Gandra Valença Tui (~10 km)

- Walk through the last Portuguese stage of the Camino
- Visit to Valença's fortress and cross the bridge into Tui (Spain)
- Final reflection circle and educational presentations: "Heritage in My Classroom"
- Certificate ceremony and celebration in Tui's old town

### Notes

The course will be conducted on foot, following the Portuguese Way of Saint James from Barcelos to Tui. Participants should be prepared for daily walks of approximately 10–15 km.

A support van will accompany the group, carrying luggage and available in case of emergencies or unexpected fatigue. This ensures a safe and flexible experience for all participants.