

July 20th—Madrid

Hola from Madrid! I arrived here around 8am local time (2am NJ time)
Arrived at the Hotel around 9:40am and the room was not ready.
I met the group of 12 people from California that are on my tour.
They came in yesterday and they were going to Toledo.

I walked around Madrid for a couple of hours I finally stopped around Noon to eat.
The menu was in Spanish and English. I had a real special dish: I had the Spanish Omelette! I am going to unpack and take a siesta.

~~~~~

## July 21st—Madrid

Today, I took it easy in the morning. The jet lag got the best of me and I took my time getting up and out of the room.

Around 11:30am I started on another tour of Madrid. Walking around the main part of the city isn't too bad. My hotel is on a main road that leads into the Plaza Mayor. The Plaza Mayor is a huge square surrounded by buildings and cafes. The city of Madrid is celebrating the 400th anniversary of the Plaza. The Plaza Mayor is at least 2 1/2 football fields!

I met the rest of the tour group and tour guides at 3pm. We walked about a mile to the Cathedral of Madrid. I celebrated Mass in the Chapel. We then took a tour of the Cathedral then in front of the Royal Palace and surrounding area. We went to the Church of St James and watched the beginning of a wedding. It's the interesting how most of the wedding traditions are alike. It was very easy to pick out the mothers of the bride and groom.

We are having our Welcoming Dinner at 8pm and will be given the schedule for tomorrow.

~~~~~

July 22nd to July 25th— On the Camino de Santiago

To All:
Sorry it's been several days since I wrote to you.
The past four days (since Saturday) have been very busy and long.

We left Madrid on Saturday morning at 8:30 AM and drove all day to **Sarria** arriving at 7:30 PM.



July 22nd to July 25th (continued)

On Sunday, we walked up a steep hill to a Monastery for Mass then started walking at 9:30 am. The path was very crowded and some really steep hills up and down! We arrived in **Portomarín** by 4:30pm. We did over 15 miles.

Yesterday (Monday) we left **Portomarín** after Mass (9:30am). The road was extremely steep going up the first hour. We walked over 26 miles, arriving in **Palas de Rei** around 5:00 PM.

Today (Tuesday) was the day! It's the feast of St James in Spain; a national holiday).

We left at 9:30 AM and walked up many hills; it was tough on knees and the feet! However, we had several check points to take a rest.

The last 30 minutes were all uphill. I arrived in **Arzua** at 6:30 pm after traveling 20 miles! Never walked that much continuously in one day! The hotel here is very nice!

Overall, the weather has been really good. It's been cool in the mornings around 57-60 degrees and high 70's in late afternoon. The first 2 days in Madrid were warm but since I've been in the Northwestern section, it's been very nice. This afternoon it was sunny and very breezy. It felt like an early autumn day. The sun sets here around 10:15 PM; a little hard to get used to.

We will be staying here tomorrow (Wednesday), so I will write a little more.

Adios!



July 28th

Hello Everyone!

It's Friday 7/28 at 6:40PM Spain time!

After 5 days of walking I made into the city of **Santiago de Compostela** around 2:00PM today. Sorry I haven't contacted since Tuesday. I started writing on Wednesday afternoon but got distracted. Our group was off on Wednesday. We all nursed tired feet. No real blisters to complain about.

The place our group was staying was outside the town of Arzua. It was very nice and overlooked a farm. Thursday we walked 15 miles a lot to fit uphill and went through farm land and forests. When we got to the hotel we were told that the Wifi was not working.



Today we left to do the 12 miles into Santiago and the Pilgrims were in the road at 6:40 AM. I could see them walking through the fields from my hotel room.

We will have dinner tonight and then go to the Cathedral for the Pilgrims' Mass tomorrow

I will try to send some pictures later...well, I'm glad that this journey has been accomplished. But really the Camino ("the Way) is never over.

Fr. Ed