



**Volunteering Program**  
**SPAIN (GALICIA)-CANADÁ**



# Table of Contents INDEX

<b>01</b>	Canada - Spain Volunteering Program .....	3
<b>02</b>	Program Objectives .....	6
<b>03</b>	Participating Organizations .....	6
<b>04</b>	Volunteers .....	7
	<b>4.1</b> Volunteer needs .....	7
	<b>4.2</b> Volunteer profile .....	7
	<b>4.3</b> Selection process .....	8
	<b>4.4</b> Collaboration agreement .....	8
	<b>4.5</b> Online course preview .....	8
	<b>4.6</b> Orientation session .....	9
	<b>4.7</b> Outline of duties .....	9
	<b>4.8</b> Supervision and mentoring .....	10
	<b>4.9</b> What is included .....	10
	<b>4.10</b> After volunteering .....	10



# 01

## The Canada - Spain Volunteering Program

Each year, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims walk the “Camino de Santiago” (Way of St. James) to visit the shrine of St. James, located in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain. About once a decade, the pilgrimage falls during a “Holy Year”. The most recent Holy Year was in 2010, when the Camino de Santiago was officially recognized as a **World Heritage** site. The next Holy Year occurs in 2021.

Currently there are **9 routes** (as well as one maritime route) which cover over 1,250 KMs of Galician territory. “El Camino” is not really a single path, rather a network of many connected paths and trails. Over the course of the centuries, different routes have been forged allowing pilgrims from all corners of Europe to arrive at the cathedral. The most frequented route is the “Camino Frances” (French Route), which is the path of choice for over half of all travellers. The other routes are the “Camino Portugués” (Portuguese Route) “Camino del Norte” (Northern Route), “Camino Primitivo” (Primitive Route), “Camino Inglés” (English Route), “la Vía de la Plata” (Silver Route) and the “Camino de Invierno” (Winter Route).

For those who wish to win “The Compostela” (a certification for having completed the Camino de Santiago), it is necessary to have walked at least the final 100 kilometers of the route (or 200 kilometers if by bicycle). As a result, one of the main starting points is Sarria, Galicia, from which approximately 30% of all participants begin. However, each year travellers arrive on foot from areas such as Egypt, Finland and Australia.



Some of the routes are:

☞ The **Camino Francés**, or French Way, is the most popular. Historically, because of the Codex Calixtinus, most pilgrims came from France: typically from Arles, Le Puy, Paris, and Vézelay; some from Saint Gilles. Cluny, site of the celebrated medieval abbey, was another important rallying point for pilgrims and, in 2002, was integrated into the official European pilgrimage route linking Vézelay and Le Puy.

Most Spanish consider the French border in the Pyrenees the natural starting point. By far the most common starting point on the Camino Francés is Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, on the French side of the Pyrenees, with Roncesvalles on the Spanish side also being popular. The distance from Roncesvalles to Santiago de Compostela through León is about 800 km.

☞ The **Camino Primitivo**, or Original Way, is the oldest route to Santiago de Compostela, first taken in the 9th century. It begins in Oviedo (Asturias).

☞ The **Camino Portugués**, or the Portuguese Way, is the second-most-popular route, starting at the cathedral in Lisbon (about 610 km) or at the cathedral in Porto in northern Portugal (about 227 km), and crossing into Galicia at Valença.

☞ The **Camino del Norte**, or the Northern Way, is also less traveled and starts in the Basque city of Irun on the border with France, or sometimes in San Sebastián. It is a less popular route because of its changes in elevation, whereas the Camino Francés is mostly flat. The route follows the coast along the Bay of Biscay until it nears Santiago. Though it does not pass through as many historic points of interest as the Camino Francés, it has cooler summer weather. The route is believed to have been first used by pilgrims to avoid traveling through the territories occupied by the Muslims in the Middle Ages.

In 2021 a Jacobean (or Holy) Year known as “Ano Xacobeo” is taking place. A year is considered holy when Saint James Day (July 25th) falls on a Sunday.

The main aims of the **“Canada - Spain Volunteering Program”** are to spread knowledge of the Way of St. James among Canadians and encourage international volunteer participation in the pilgrimage 2020 and 2021 (Jacobean Year).



## Why Canada?

Volunteering is a big part of Canadian culture, and is even required for high school graduation in some provinces and territories. In Ontario, for example, high school students must participate in a minimum 40 hours of volunteering to graduate. This requirement builds strong social awareness among youth, and encourages young Canadians and future leaders to be more engaged and involved in their communities.

Volunteering is truly a part of Canadian DNA - 87% of people over age 16 believe that Canadian communities would suffer without volunteers, and 75% think the economy would also decline. It is estimated that Canadians volunteer over 2 billion hours per year, and this service is done by 45% of the population.

The majority nationality of the pilgrims are first Spanish, then Italian, followed by Germany and the United States. Canadian pilgrimage ranks in at #12, so there is much Canadians can learn from this program.

The future leaders of tomorrow are the engaged youth of today. In an increasingly globalized world, it is of utmost importance that these leaders develop an understanding of different cultural, societal and community needs.

This program will improve volunteers' communication skills, deepen their knowledge of Spanish culture, and allow them plentiful opportunities to meet new people from around the world. All of this takes place at the beautiful World Heritage site of The Way of Saint James.

Red Leaf will only receive payment for costs associated with running the program (projected at \$440CND). Finances will be made clear and transparent, and will be without any profit. Due to high interest in this project, Red Leaf is also seeking sponsorship from multiple companies such as Air Canada, the Canada-Spain Chamber of Commerce, Avi Insurances, and more.

## Program Objectives

Xacobeo 2021 is a state-wide project, although initially it will be focused in Galicia and its four provinces. With increased program awareness, we anticipate opening to other parts of Spain and even to Portugal.

The primary objective of the program is to encourage young Canadians to volunteer at the Way of Saint James, and spread knowledge and understanding of this cultural heritage to Canada.

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## Participating Organizations 03

The project has the support of the following entities:

- ▶ **Air Canada** will support volunteers' flight transportation with a discount (exact amount TBD).
- ▶ **Canada-Spain Chamber of Commerce** will assist in creating awareness of the project among Canadians and Canadian companies.
- ▶ **Red Leaf** is conducting the program and will work to connect with interested School Boards, Colleges and Universities. It will coordinate all logistical issues and online training, and will support and manage volunteers during the program.



Cámara  
de  
Comercio  
**Canadá  
España**

## 4.1. Needs

Below are the initial program needs. In this first stage, all volunteers will be located in Galicia, Spain, but this could be extended to other locations in Spain or Portugal in the future. The length of the program is 15 days (2 weeks) with a concrete starting and ending days for all volunteers.

2020

**between 100 - 150 volunteers during summer, but also in March Break and other timing**

2021

**between 100 - 150 volunteers during summer, but also in March Break and other timing**

## Volunteers

## 4.2. Profile and recruiting

For recruiting volunteers, Red Leaf has contacts with School Boards, Colleges and Universities. Red Leaf will create a web site (<http://www.govolunteerinspain.com>) to explain everything related with the project.

This website will also serve as a method of promotion for the Way of Saint James.

The requirements for being volunteer are:

- ▶ 18 years old or older.
- ▶ Ability to speak English or French, and a bit of Spanish
- ▶ Previous experience volunteering.
- ▶ Excitement to volunteer abroad
  - Preference given to those who are enthusiastic about supporting pilgrims in hostels throughout their journey along the Way of Saint James.

### 4.3. Selection process

Red Leaf will interview potential volunteers by phone. The aim of this call is to get to know better each other, to learn about the volunteering experience, and to resolve any questions volunteers may have.

### 4.4. Collaboration agreement

All the volunteers must sign a collaboration agreement for their participation in the program. This agreement explains what is included in the program, as well as the rules and regulations.

### 4.5. Online course preview

All selected volunteers will undergo an online course before traveling.

The contents of this training will be developed by Red Leaf and the Galician government, based on other volunteering experiences.

Red Leaf will support the volunteers in this training and resolve any questions they may have.



### 4.6. Orientation session

Volunteers will travel to Oporto Airport on a set day. As they may be traveling from different airports, they will not be accompanied by Red Leaf staff at this stage of travel.

In Oporto, Red Leaf staff will be waiting for them and will help them transfer to Galicia by bus. In Galicia, they will receive an Orientation Session and then will be transferred, one by one, to the hostel where they will volunteer.

### 4.7. Outline of duties

Volunteers, supported by the owner of the hostel (called "alberguero"), will assist pilgrims by providing:

- ▶ Information about the hostel and the village where it is located
- ▶ Support to help resolve pilgrims' questions
- ▶ Guided tours to the main historical places in the town or surrounding natural areas

## 4.8. Supervision and mentoring

Canadian volunteers will be supported by the owner of the hostels (called "albergueros"). They will resolve all questions regarding their daily duties. Red Leaf will also offers support throughout the program.

## 4.9. What is included

- ▶ Interview by conference call with Red Leaf staff
- ▶ Online training before departure
- ▶ Orientation in Galicia
- ▶ Ending assessment meeting in Galicia
- ▶ Transfer from/to Oporto Airport and the Orientation point
- ▶ Transfer from/to the Orientation Point and the Hostel
- ▶ Accomodation and 3 meals per day from the day of orientation to the final assessment meeting
- ▶ Medical and travel insurance
- ▶ Final certificate

### The program does not include:

- ▶ International flight from / to Oporto Airport

The cost of the program for the volunteer is \$440 CND.

## 4.10. After volunteering

An ending assessment will take place in Galicia after the completion of the two-week volunteer program. All volunteers will receive a final certification.

### For further information:

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