

## KA2 – ZAPISI O ROMANJU

Camino is not just about walking on a road. Camino is about walking over your fears, your insecurities and being reborn as the best version of yourself.

This journey has been a special experience for all of us, we had the opportunity to meet other cultures and different kinds of lifestyles, meeting new people that I would have never met if it were not because of the Erasmus. It is something so special! Even though the pain of walking, and all our effort to wake up earlier than ever and healing our blisters, every one of us knew it was worth it.

We came to Sarria knowing very little of what the way of Saint Jacob meant. We knew it was hard, of course, but we all believed in ourselves. The first day was actually pretty easy.

It was a new experience and the landscapes were amazing. We met our guide, Pepe who taught us a lot and helped us on the journey. The feeling of satisfaction we got when we got to our destination can not be explained in words. We accomplished something so big. WE DID IT! The next day was a bit harder. Our feet started hurting and waking up at 6 am was not exactly usual for some of us. But we still went and did the road. I believe that has to be the whole motto of the road. No matter how tired you feel or how much you want to give up YOU HAVE TO KEEP GOING.

We finally finished. And along the road we learned to accept the differences between our countries because we all walked the same road and we all felt the same pain from our blisters. We learned a lot about ourselves and about the people around us. We formed very strong friendships.

We expected something completely different from what it was. It was not good but it was not bad either, it was simply a completely different experience than any previous one.

We walked a lot, with a lot of pain, but in the end it was gratifying. If you ask us why we did it, we still do not know how to answer it. But it was an experience for life. It was great and special because it was a new opportunity to meet new people from other countries. Saint James way was a really amazing experience but it was really hard because we had a lot of challenges

At the end of the road, we were so tired yet so happy to be in Santiago de Compostela. All of the difficulties we faced disappeared the moment we saw the big church.

We think Camino is an experience you need to try but it's not an easy experience. You will have to face many difficulties, but at the end of the day it is really worth it.

5 days ago, a group of teenagers of 4 different nationalities started their way towards the experience of the St James Way. What none of us fully expected is how this way would change our lives.

Our journey began on the 26th of April, 2022, with a 7 hour bus trip to Sarria. In Sarria we were met with a big surprise, a huge hotel besides a monastery, at first, we were a little bit scared, everything was new, people, hotel, and more, the whole experience was about to begin...

April 27, the day that everything started, was when we found out what walking by foot for such a long distance really meant. For some, the

25 kilometers meant an energizing new experience, but for others it meant feet full of blisters and many encounters with Pepe and his medical attention, this experience made us realize and understand why so many people from everywhere in the world do this journey. We saw many people, one's in bikes, other riding horses and many more, this way really has a meaning and we didn't realize it until we experience it.

We walked 5 days together, we past forests, streets, villages, cities and many more places, everyone of us felt in the skin what was the mix of many emotions at the same time, happiness, pain, sadness, during the way. In this journey we had different types of people some felt good during all the way and ignored the pain but others didn't resist the tiredness. Even if at times we felt too weak to go on, we managed to push each other's limits and give each other strength, even if just by communicating or by sharing memories, learning new languages and telling stories.

If we could go back in past and give ourselves a tip for this week, it would surely be enjoy the views and the people around you, because all the pain and blisters will be worth it in the end.

**Q: What was the most difficult challenge encountered, and how did you manage to overcome it?**

The most difficult challenge for me and my team were blisters, leg and foot pain. We managed to overcome leg and foot pain with regular massages and cold showers to regenerate and relax our muscles, but with blisters it's a little different. If the blister was already damaged we extracted the remaining water out of the blister, and then cut the excess skin away, but if it wasn't damaged we just put a bandage called »second skin« over it. (Ažbe, 16)

**Q: How did you prepare to do the St. James Way?**

In Portugal we did 8-12km walks weekly, which in a way it looked like it would prepare us, but at least for me it didn't help, I prepared mostly on the St. James walk because I wasn't expecting the weight on my back and the blisters and pain in my feet, I bought the equipment enough to make me survive but the way was still hard. (Guilherme, 17)

**Q: What was that part of the walk that made you almost give up, and why didn't you?**

I didn't want to give up, but the hardest day was the third day. We walked for 9 hours and I wasn't ready at all. I didn't give up because I was with my team and we did it all together and we are proud of it. (Bryan, 18)

**Q: Which is the thing you wish you knew before doing this trip?**

I wish I knew how much does it take to walk a kilometre, how to avoid having blisters and also which are my true limits so I wouldn't have felt overwhelmed by the distance. (Isaac, 15)

**Q: What was your motivation doing the trip?**

What has motivated me to do the path has been knowing that when I finish it I will have managed to overcome the limits I had and knowing that I could do whatever I wanted. (Claudia, 15)

**Q: What is the most valuable lesson you learnt from this trip?**

For me the lesson that I have learnt is that even if you can't handle the pain anymore you will always find strengths from somewhere to be able to continue this trip. (Lucia, 16)

**Q: Who was the most fascinating person you've encountered on the Camino and why?**

By far the most fascinating person that I've encountered was actually a person who wasn't really the most inspiring character, although he had a kind of promoted good habits, so Palace del Rei I walked along with the Romanian group, met a Romanian sports-oriented shop owner who claimed to win 19 gold medals in 19 different sports. He also claimed that he was the nephew of Nadia Comaneci, one of the most important sports figures in all Romanian history, the first gymnast to score the perfect 10. All of us were so impressed by his achievements, but this admiration ended as quickly as it began. When we googled him, we didn't find anything that supported his claims. Probably he was nothing but a con artist. (Mihai, 18)

**Q: How was the experience of sleeping with other 80 different people in the same room?**

It was definitely a thing I have never experienced before, but it felt surprisingly natural and not peculiar at all, as if I was staying with my family. Moreover, the sense of community I felt was at that moment new to me. (Darius, 17)

**Q: What was your coping mechanism against the pain?**

First of all, every day I would have two more blisters and to cope with that I had Pepe to help me. I also had this anti-blister dressing pads, and much more vaseline on my feet before putting on my socks. I also had pain in my knees and to cope with that I would take some pills and forget about the pain because while walking I would be talking to somebody. (Matilde, 17)