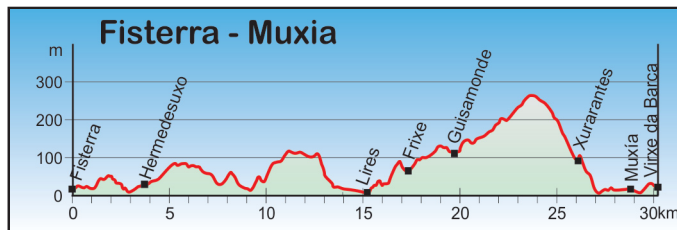


The pilgrims' way from Fisterra to Muxía

You can debate whether, in a historical sense, the Way from Fisterra to Muxía is truly a Way of St. James or not. Most residents of the rather economically underdeveloped Muxía like to consider their hometown, as do the residents of Santiago and Fisterra, as the true end of the Way of St. James. Which is why they likely are also willing to believe in the wonder of the Virxe da Barca (Ship's Virgin), described later, and enjoy the blessing of the economic privileges which the rising number of pilgrims over the last few years bring along.

According to quite a few historians and, by the way, also the author of this book, the pilgrims' Way to the sanctuary of Muxía does not have more or less relevance to the history of the Way of St. James than numerous other locations along the classic Way and throughout Spain.

All these views and opinions should, however, not be of any large concern when you decide on your own personal Way of St. James and where the final destination of your Way should be.



The Way from Fisterra to Muxía winds itself through the now again increasingly forested Galician hilly landscape. Only rarely does it run directly along the ocean, but sometimes offers a view of it as well as numerous possibilities to make a short side trip and visit and/or bathe in it.

Except for the sanctuary Virxe da Barca, bizarrely located on a stone-reef and a few bathing beaches, the secluded town of Muxía offers only few attractions and possibilities to spend your time, but therefore offers more seclusion and silence than Santiago or Fisterra.

Short: If you do not want to finish your Way in Fisterra, and still have a little time and energy to let your pilgrim's journey slowly fade along the secluded paths near the ocean, the Way to Muxía can well be rewarding.

📍 The marking and condition of the Way to Muxía. As the Way between Fisterra and Muxía can be walked in either direction, it is marked with shells which are pointing both upwards and downwards. In addition to that, you find arrows pointing in both directions at numerous spots along the Way. An "F" points the Way to Fisterra and an "M" the Way to Muxía. Where the signs on the Way are not clearly marked, my description of the Way helps you out in the following text. The Way leads you over little-used roads as well as field-and-forest trails and usually does not present a major challenge. R Also for bikers, the Way is basically possible to tackle without problems.

😊 Tips for stage planning. The shortest route from Fisterra to Muxía is 28.2 km. For most seasoned pilgrims, this distance can be tackled in one day without major problems.

Consider, however, if you want to do this track "fast," or if you would rather prefer to intentionally take more time on this last part of the Way. If you decide on taking on and experiencing this Way alongside to the ocean, I naturally recommend a small detour which brings you directly to the ocean and also facilitates a longer stay or

a small bath. For those who therefore want to really to enjoy this Way along the ocean, it could be rewarding to take it easy and to comfortably finish the first day in Lires. On the following day, there will then be also enough time to play with, to be able to enjoy the last evening in Muxía.

Fisterra - Lires km

13.2/15.2

😊 Concerning the refuge situation in Lires, there have been many changes lately. If you wish to spend the night there, it is recommended to first check to see how the current conditions have actually developed. For example, call the (planned) refuges, visit the updates to this Way on the website of the Conrad Stein Verlag, or ask for updated information at the public refuge in Fisterra.

Take sufficient water for the Way to Lires, because until shortly before reaching the town, you will not find a shopping possibility on the described route.

🚶 From the public refuge in the center of Fisterra, you head back 600 m on the Way of St. James until, at an old stone way cross you reach the location where you see the street coming from the beach. Now you do not go further back on the Way of St. James, but follow this street further into a left curve. After 450 m, you leave the wide road directly in front of a green bus stop shed located behind the Hotel Arenal, and head on a small street uphill half-left towards San Martiño. After 350 m, you reach a junction and continue half-right below the row of houses. You basically always follow the street straight ahead and across a few intersections until, after 1.4 km, you reach a stone wall and make a left turn onto a paved road.

Only 150 m further, you reach a narrow road and turn half-left. Continuing straight ahead you reach and cross the location after 800 m (km 3.8).

🚶 **Coastal variant.** At the end of the village Hermedesuxo you reach an intersection. Now pay close attention. Half-right it continues further on the regular, marked Way of St. James. But I recommend to now follow the coastal variant which is not marked, but for pilgrims with a little sense of direction easy to find using the following description. This variant, indeed, runs mostly on a (lightly-used) road and is 900 m longer, but offers a nicer view and also faster access to the ocean.

At the end of town, you leave the marked Way of St. James and turn to the left upward towards **O Castro/Vilar**. This road leads you 850 m uphill to an intersection with another bus shed, where you make a turn to the right. Once you have reached the town limit after 200 m, you make a left upwards. The road follows an immediate right curve and reaches its altitude near a granary. It continues 100m straight ahead and then you reach a viewing point from where you can see both sides of the cape in good weather conditions. Still 100 m further, pilgrims willing to bathe can go down to the left 500 m to reach 🌊 Playa de Arnela. On the recommended coastal route here, however, it goes further straight ahead on the small paved road, and after another 450 m you reach the town entrance of **Denle** (km 5.7). You go 200 m further through the town, reach a path







crossing close to the edge of town, and go past a small bus stop up to the left. Soon the road levels out again and you can again see both sides of the cape.


After 400 m, you reach the town sign of **Castromiñán**. But the town itself will not be entered, because after 100 m at the first path junction, you already take a half-right downhill and reach, after 200 m and having reached the bottom near a small bus stop, a somewhat wider road, which you follow to the left. After 400 m, this one continues straight, then it delineates a right curve and follows the coastal line always up and downhill in larger and smaller intervals. At different spots you can now make side trips to the left to the different „bays of the nearby ocean; its whooshing will accompany you during the following kilometers. After 2.9 km, a forest road crosses the paved road at a sharp ascent (150 m past a descent to a bay). From the right, the marked Way of St. James merges in and it continues further on the same small paved road straight ahead and steeply uphill (km 9.9).





Shared Way. You go for another 200 m on the steep road uphill, then, near a stop sign, you reach another road and make a left turn – but only for 80 m, then the road will run left again to a half-left onto a path, which soon leads into a forest. After 900 m, you reach a path junction and keep on going further half-right up onto the path which is a bit better trodden. Always following the broadest path, you reach the end of the forest after 500 m. The Way now leads again a little downhill, and after 30 m you reach the edge of another forest where you can again decide between two variants of the way (km 11.6).

If you want to arrive fast, stay on the official way to the half-right down, past the town of **Canosa** and after 2.5 km reach the town center of **Lires** (km 14.1). I recommend, though, that you take the 1.1 km longer, but really considerably more beautiful way along the coast which, at least during my visit in June 2012, is well-marked throughout with yellow markers and a true highlight of the way. Should the arrows be missing after all, the following description of the way will help you to remain on the already easy to find path.

Coastal variant. Having reached the edge of the forest, you follow the arrows or a sign half-left or straight towards Bar/Playa Lires. The way initially runs slightly uphill and then level along the edge of the forest. Then, after 300 m, you reach a crossing and go further straight ahead. Always following the same ravine, you reach a forest and after 280 m a junction, where you initially have to make a left and right after that, take an immediate right curve. The way runs along the edge of a forest and downhill through the forest, then, after 800 m, you reach the coastal line. Always on the widest road, it continues level for 500 m and then downhill. At the nice „Playa de Lires, you will reach a paved road again and follow it half-right respectively straight ahead 150 m to the  beach bar (km 13.6).

Bar del Playa. Here, with a view on the ocean, food and drinks are offered at decent prices (until 2012 no menu available).  The family rents out a cute small cottage with a double bed, kitchen, and washing machine, which, however, is in high demand and, depending on the season, will cost between € 20 and 40.  Holy week until Oct  646 436 617.


If after a few (alcoholic) beverages you are finally able to break free from the view of the ocean and/or the beautiful eyes of “Lollis” (Dolores, the pretty daughter of the house), you follow the little-used paved coastal road or sea inlet further straight ahead until after 1.1 km you reach a bridge, which you cross and after 80 m in front of a small church, reach, the official marked Way again and go straight ahead further up. The immediate next house on the right is the  Casa Rural Raúl, and after further 280 m, also on the right-hand side





is the  Casa Luz. Yey another 50 m further, a cul-de-sac branches off to the half-left. This is to be the route to the  new private refuge. If you instead go another 70 m further uphill, you reach an intersection with two bulky granaries where the stage described here ends. To the right you reach, after 100 m, the  bar-hotel-refuge “As Eiras” and further on the  “Casa Jesus”. To the left, though, the Way of St. James continues further (km 15.2).







Lires

↑ pop. approx. 300   

 If you want to acquire the “Muxiana” in Muxía, you should not miss getting a stamp in your credential in Lires from one of the bed and breakfasts, hotels, or bars.

   **New private refuge.** Directions: 70 m ahead of the granaries at the end of the stage go 50 m half-left. According to the optimistic plans of the owner - a private refuge with 24 beds, kitchen, and bar will be opened here at the end of 2013. Also, a menu is to be offered then. Until then, the family of the “Casa Jesus” also offers single- and double rooms from € 32.  981 748 158, 981 748 393 or 696 029 810

   **Bar-hotel-refuge “As Eiras”.** Way: At the end of the stage, turn 100 m to the right. Since 2012, the hotel also tentatively offers 8 spaces in two rather austere but clean rooms for € 12. The price-value rate was still improving in 2012; therefore, if and how the concept will continue is still uncertain. They also offer single rooms from € 20 and doubles from € 40, as well as a menu for an imposing € 12.  981 748 180

☞ There town has bed and breakfasts in nice, rustic country houses which in Spain are called "casa rurales". For pilgrims willing and able to treat themselves to something special at the end of the Way, so far they offer a good price-value ratio in Lires. As described above, there are several casas rurales directly located on the Way of St. James. The "Casa Raúl", for example, offers, depending on the season and furnishings, sgl from € 24 and dbl from € 30, ☎ 981 748 156. A little less expensive, "Casa Luz" offers accommodation to pilgrims starting from e 20 for a sgl and from e 30 for a dbl, ☎ 981 748 924. Breakfast is added for additional € 3.50 p.p.

Lires - Muxía

14.2/15.0 km

🚶 After crossing the two granaries, you keep on to the half-right twice and after 200 m leave, the town towards a forest. After further 200 m, you cross a broad stream on a special stone bridge built for pilgrims.

📍 To the left of the bridge, you can still see the stone blocks only the brave among the pilgrims used until 2011 and this way to Muxia therefore was difficult to walk for many pilgrims.

After 250 m, the cobbled way ends and it continues further straight ahead on an original, stony field way which becomes a path and leads uphill through a forest. After 350 m, you reach a paved road and continue further half-left up. After 1 km, the path ends in Frixe (km 2.0). You go left and immediately half-right after 20 m, and then the Way leads you 800 m over a nice forest path to a paved road that you cross to the left. On a nice forest path it continues for 1.4 km. Then you have to pay close attention, because at a stall on the left-hand side, there is a sudden turn half-left onto a path leading past the stall. After 150 m, you reach a small paved road and make a right. Only 50 m further, you cross a street near **Guisamonde** (km 4.4).

Soon it continues through a forest and 1.6 km further on a street until you reach a junction. Here, you continue upwards straight ahead. Only 130 m further, you reach another road junction and again continue further upwards. After 1 km you again reach a road and turn right. But you only follow the road for 350 m and leave it again to the left onto a broad road leading uphill. After 800 m you have reached the highest point near the edge of a forest. Now it starts going initially slightly and then continuously steeper downhill.

After 1.8 km, you again have to pay close attention: Here you reach a road junction where three roads and a bit overgrown forest path or ravine merge. First, make a right downhill, but after 50 m, immediately make a left. It continues downhill for 520 m until, in Xuarantes (Churarantes), you reach a paved road again and then make a left (km 10.7). Soon you leave the village and after 470 m reach a paved road.

😊 If you want to avoid obstacles at very late hours or in bad weather, follow the road now for 150 m to the right and then make a left, always following the road to Muxia. 🚲 This advice is especially for bikers.

On the official (more pleasant but partly inconspicuous) path, you make a half-left over the paved road onto a forest path. Ignore the first branching leading to the right, and after 350 m at a second branching, you make a half-right onto a ravine, which, well-trodden, leads steeper downhill (in the year 2012 badly marked). Soon, you leave the forest and the sandy path leads further downhill. After 100 m, you go half-left / straight ahead on a path leading along a wall covered by ferns. The sometimes obscured path becomes completely hidden after 200 m. Now you keep to the right and after 50 m, to the start of a gravel road which you follow to the left up to the road. After you hike/hiking 200 m steeply uphill, you have reached the road and continue on it in the same direction. After 1.2 km, you are at the edge of the town of Muxía and after 150 m further, the first town street

leads up to the right. Here you have to decide if you want to make a right to go to the 🏠 public refuge, or further straight ahead into town to the 🏠 private refuge and to the sanctuary (km 13.6).

🚶 **Directions into the town and to the stone reef with the Church "Virxe de Barca"**. There are different, partly incompletely marked ways into the town and to the stone reef. The one described in the following text seems to be the simplest one:

Church Virxe da Barca at the stone reef of Muxía



You follow the main road into town for 300 m straight ahead until you see a bay on the left-hand side. Here, you make a half-left following the cobbled path between the bay and the (playground/square). After 150 m, you leave the path, go further straight ahead into the next street and after 100 m reach another square with a lantern in the center. Here you now make a half-left into Rúa Atalaia. You follow the street 300 m until shortly before the edge of town, exactly to the point where the paving ends, and the street continues as a concrete road further uphill to the left. If you want to go to the 🏠 private refuge, you make a downhill turn to the right. If you keep on going straight ahead on the cobbled street you reach, after 550 m, the church "Virxe da Barca" (km 15).

Muxía

↑ pop. 5,000 🏠 🚶 🚲 🏠 🏠 🚶 🚶 🚶

📍 The tourist information is located in the "Casa del Cultura," below the private refuge (see below description of direction). Here rooms are also referred (sgl from e 25 and dbl from 30) and the "Muxiana" is issued. 7 Jul until Aug, daily 10 am to 2 pm and 4 pm to 8 pm, in the past somewhat irregular

☺ **The Muxiana.** Since 2005, pilgrims can get a certificate for the pilgrimage to Muxia, as well. The certificate is usually issued after showing the credential in the tourist information "Casa del Cultura". Sometimes, e.g. if the tourist information is closed, the certificate can also be obtained in the public refuge. Normally it is necessary to show, besides a stamp from Fisterra, a stamp also from a bar, bed and breakfast, or refuge in Lires.

View over the roofs of Muxía



❗ **Rheumatism, Kidney disease, Stone Sail, Maria, St. James and the Sunset.** Both the religious and publicity-effective legend says that at where the stone reef with the church "Virxe da Barca" (18th century) is today located, the Holy Virgin Mary once appeared to the zealous missionary St. James on a seafaring stone vessel and gave him courage. In the stone reef lies a stone "A Pedra dos Cadrís" which in its shape symbolizes the sail of that aforesaid boat of the Virxe da Barca (Virgin from the boat). If you are there, you can try (probably with questioning looks from your astonished pilgrim friends) to crawl underneath the stone sail nine times, and hope that the religious prophecy will be fulfilled - sparing or healing you from rheumatism or kidney disease. You can also use this somewhat mystical place to find peace near the sound of the sea and extensively enjoy the last sunset of your Way.

🏠 **Public refuge.** Directions to the refuge: You leave the access road on the location described above, uphill to the right onto a steep concrete road. After 220 m, you reach an intersection in front of the Guardia Civil and continue further straight ahead. After further 350 m, the public refuge is located on the right-hand side (km 14.2). The clean, spacious,

modern refuge offers 24 beds in a large dormitory and 8 more in a smaller one, in addition to a well-equipped kitchen, a large common room, lockers, and a roof terrace. Pilgrims arriving by bus will not be taken in.

☎ 620 112 902 or 610 264 325, 🕒 year-round 1 pm to 10 pm, € 5

🏠 **Private Refuge.** Directions to the refuge: At the location described above, shortly before the end of town, go 80 m down to the right until you reach a square with a stone cross (km 14.6). The neat and modernly designed refuge "Bela Muxía," which opened in June 2012, offers 36 beds in 2 dormitories, a well-equipped kitchen and a nice, bright common area, lockers and two dbls. for € 40 per room. Also, pilgrims will be taken in who did not arrive on foot. The price-value ratio was not completely convincing in my opinion. Towels for € 1, washing machine and dryer for € 3 each, Internet.

☎ 981 742 041 or 687 798 222, 🕒 year-round from approx. 11 am, € 12

🚌 **Bus connections to Fisterra and to Santiago.** From Muxía, daily buses depart frequently to Fisterra and Santiago, though in some cases you have to change buses e.g. in Cée. More information on the daily and seasonally very different connections are available at the tourist information office.