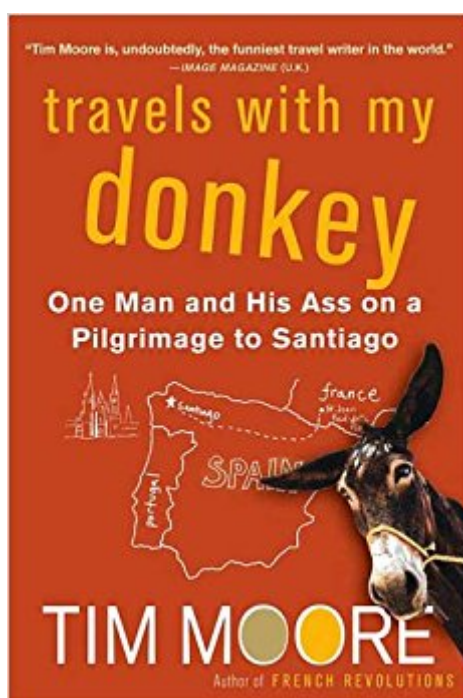


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Travels With My Donkey: One Man And His Ass On A Pilgrimage To Santiago



Synopsis

Having no knowledge of Spanish and even less about the care and feeding of donkeys, Tim Moore, Britain's indefatigable traveling Everyman, sets out on a pilgrimage to the cathedral at Santiago de Compostela with a donkey named Shinto as his companion. Armed only with a twelfth-century handbook to the route and expert advice on donkey management from Robert Louis Stevenson, Moore and his four-legged companion travel the ancient five-hundred-mile route from St. Jean Pied-de-Port, on the French side of the Pyrenees, to the cathedral at Santiago de Compostela which houses the remains of Spain's patron saint, St. James. Over sun-scorched highways, precipitous bridges, dirt paths shaded by leafy trees, and vineyards occasionally lashed by downpours, Moore and Shinto pass through some of northern Spain's oldest towns and cities in colorful company. Clearly more interested in Shinto than in Moore, their fellow walkers are an assortment of devout Christian pilgrims, New Age--spirituality seekers aspiring to be the next Shirley Maclaine, Baby Boomers contemplating middle age, and John Q Public just out for a cheap, boozy sun-drenched outdoor holiday. As Moore pushes, pulls, wheedles, cajoles, and threatens Shinto across Spain, the duo overnights in the bedrooms, dormitories, and---for Shinto---grassy fields of northern Spain. Shinto, a donkey with a finely honed talent for relieving himself at the most inopportune moments, has better luck in the search for his next meal than Moore does in finding his inner pilgrim. Undaunted, however, Man and Beast finally arrive at the cathedral and a successful end to their journey. For readers who delighted in his earlier books, *Travels With my Donkey* is the next hilarious chapter in the travels of Tim Moore, a book that keeps the bones of St. James rattling to this day.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A man, a donkey, and a very long walk: Moore's latest European adventure (after French Revolutions and others) finds him embarking on an ages-old physical and spiritual pilgrimage across Spain to the famed cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. Moore entertains with his snappy one-liners and skewed views of the locals, his fellow pilgrims and his own reasons for undertaking the camino. Against advice to the contrary, he pursues his search for a donkey to accompany him, which "upgraded his camino from big walk to revelatory voyage of self-examination." Moore shines in detailing "Tim and Shinto's Excellent Adventure": during the day, he accumulates "clicks" (kilometers) and cajoles Shinto across bridges, grates and roads; afternoons and evenings are spent searching for donkey-friendly lodgings (and encountering a share of slammed doors). Fellow pilgrims (the "Baroness von Munchausen

—“Bill Bryson's *A Walk in the Woods*, this feels like the natural sequel---a well-told comic misadventure with a history lesson woven in for good measure. This is about the most entertaining travel writing you're going to pick up this year. A rollicking ride through the Spanish countryside with quirky observations, more interesting company than Chaucer seemed to find, and an ass named Shinto who now has enough comic material to jump on the lecture circuit. Arriving in Santiago with Moore was even more enjoyable than the journey I made along the Camino myself. All the fun, none of the blisters.” —Doug Lansky, author of *Last Trout in Venice* and *First Time Around the World*

"Shirley MacLaine's *The Camino: A Journey of the Spirit*, loosely billed as an account of her walk from St. Jean to Santiago ... is a book so mad it howls at the moon, a book that with any name on its cover but that of a Hollywood legend would have had orderlies with soft, placatory smiles knocking on the author's door ... Just as I'd envy any full-on Christians I'd meet for their appealing belief in an eternal paradise, so, in a less straightforward fashion, I envied Shirley: an understanding of one's destiny in life, enhanced etheric vibrations in the brain, the multidimensional presence of gnomes, fairies and trolls - what's not to like?" - from *TRAVELS WITH MY DONKEY* "No man can ever have felt more proud of a donkey as I did watching Shinto crap atop the Cruz de Ferro. It was, indeed, his pilgrimage too." - from *TRAVELS WITH MY DONKEY*, as the author and Shinto stand atop the famous pilgrimage milestone In 2004, for no particular reason related to piety, author Tim Moore decided to make the venerable east to west pilgrimage across the width of northern Spain starting at Valcarlos and ending at Santiago de Compostela at the enshrined (supposed) remains of

the apostle Saint James. Not wishing to carry his stuff all 466 miles, Moore decides to pack it in with a donkey. Thus Shinto, an ultimately endearing 200 kilogram package of obstinacy, phobias, and more or less stoic forbearance. The book's biggest flaw is the lack of any photos - especially photos of "Shints" - even though the author makes multiple references to pictures taken. I had to go to the Web to retrieve a color snap of Tim and his faithful companion which I printed, trimmed, and pasted into the book for the benefit of its next owner. Shinto bears little resemblance to the donkey portrayed on the volume's front cover. As a lapsed Catholic and in the face of life's day-to-day responsibilities, Moore's 41-day trudge seemed an enormous waste of time. However, that doesn't prevent a feeling of reluctant admiration for one who'd actually do it, especially while pushing, pulling, and cajoling livestock all the way. After all, Tim produced an engaging and humorous narrative about the experience which provided several days of chuckles. And I did appreciate the author's comments about Shirley MacLaine.

Entertaining and funny! LOL! I just ran the last 115km of the Camino de Santiago from Sarria to Santiago de Compostela over a 5 day period so I especially enjoyed Tim's insight on his journey...WITH a donkey! The guy's Crazy! Tim gets a 10 for creativity and originality. Unbelievable that anyone would "haul ass" along El Camino. Shints has a cool personality. Very well written. Well done, Tim!

Tim Moore, the travel writer, cynically, but wittily, decides to go on this famous pilgrimage across Northern Spain. However, with no experience with donkeys, he elects to make the arduous journey with the assistance of one. Believing the donkey will make his life easier, and aware that they were in the Bible, Tim sets out on a learning experience :) You can be an armchair traveler and still enjoy this well-written book.

I loved this book. I started it before I did the walk and it was harder to imagine and follow. When I got back I finished it and got into it more. I have given it to 2 other people who have done the walk and I would give it to more people. He is a brilliant writer, though a little obscure at times, but I appreciated that. It is not in the slightest bit patronising. It assumes intelligence in the reader. There are some great descriptions of scenes and conversations. Priceless. And there is a surprising depth to it in terms of both historical context (with a cynical edge) and of his emotional process. P.s. I recommend walking the Camino with the same enthusiasm!

Moore's sense of humor and his complaints get him to the Pas de Roman to visit the Spanish Santiago Cathedral over the Pyrenees from the Atlantic Coast of France. Along the way, we are all drawn into his contacts with other, serious and not so serious pilgrims; the landscapes; the hardships of caring for this donkey animal he starts the trip with not knowing or caring much about; the incredible overnight sleeping accommodations he encounters; the meals; the brandy; the elevations; rain and shale; bridges and cobble stones. Having driven a lot of the trail myself without knowing much about what it was or what I was doing, I was tied into this wonderful and hilarious story every bit of the way, enjoying his cynicism and suspicion until he reached the pinnacle of Santiago for all his cold dismissal of the energy required to make this pilgrimage. I sensed he made quite a turn by the time he reached the end of the journey but then perhaps he'd started out more committed to personal spiritual reasons for the journey than I'd understood at the beginning. I LOVED the book, his hilarious ability to laugh at himself and his circumstances, his brilliant evaluations of others' situations, his cautious thoughtful spiritual tussles along the path and most of all the subtle way he slipped in so much of the history of that great period when the Crusaders were displacing the Saracens or the Muslims. The weight of the themes sneaks in on the reader as the book develops - there are so many twists and turns that this book would be a fantastic book club or academic assignment as it calls out for interaction among readers. Would it ever become a book tape? Would it ever become a play? I feel it should have wider dissemination. Great book!

Interesting twist on the Camino trail narrative in that the author decides to make about 500 kilometers with a donkey. The total lack of experience with donkeys and the truculent nature of any donkey provide some interesting narrative although it might have been better had the author developed his background, motivation, and other personal insights. There is a certain amount of repetitive events but that is hardly avoidable in such a narrative. Nonetheless, the book is a fun read and worth the investment of time.

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