

# CAMINO CLOSURE

After completing the Camino Santiago hike, mountain biker **Miroda Otto** felt like there was still something missing. So she rented a bike and rode a unique Camino #radride route on her own.



that my plan to get to Fisterre and back in 1.5 days was going to be impossible. I needed to find WiFi to adjust my plans. I stopped at a small B&B and bumped into the Portuguese guys. They were drinking beer, eating *jamon* (ham) and tapas and they offered me some of their Portuguese Port.

**Five years ago my friend**, who was very run down and needed a break from work, decided to hike the Camino Santiago for a month. When she returned, she looked like a different person, full of energy and ready to take on anything. I was inspired and added the Camino to my bucket list. As with most things in life, I kept having to postpone my Camino conquest.

This year, while on my way to Germany, a friend asked if I'd be interested in hiking the Camino Santiago for two weeks. I shifted a few plans and the next thing I knew I was on my way to Spain!

My hike started in Lyon with the idea of completing 350km to Santiago in 11 days, an average of 30-40km a day. I enjoyed the hiking but I missed my bike, especially when I got two blisters after day two and terrible tendonitis around day four.

Post hike, I desperately needed to get back into my cycling training. My hotel concierge suggested I cycle the Camino de Fisterre – a unique route as it's the only one that starts in Santiago de Compostela and then heads west towards the Atlantic Ocean and Cape Finisterre. She raved about the beautiful sunsets in Fisterre and that it's been referred to as "the end of the earth". This was enough inspiration for me.

A few challenges lay before me: finding a bike rental shop in Santiago, on a Friday afternoon, with the right size mountain bike with panniers; mapping my route of 150km to get to the airport on time for my flight on Sunday afternoon (I planned to ride



at least 100km on Saturday and the rest on Sunday morning); realising the seat post on the bike I rented was stuck, and way too low, so after heading back to the bike shop on Saturday morning and finding a large size bike, I only headed off at 12.30pm! These amazing trips that I do usually take lots of effort, and getting out of your comfort zone, but you end up appreciating it so much more!

I felt I had to have a real Camino bike experience to compare to



the hike, so I took everything that I carried on the hike with me on the bike. Never underestimate the impact that carrying extra weight has on the speed you travel! My first stop was to take a pic at the first Camino distance signpost. I asked a group of Portuguese cyclists, who were en route to Muxia, to take a photo for me.

The trail was a lot more technical than I expected and I was extremely happy to be on a mountain bike instead of a touring bike with no suspension. There was also amazing single track, technical climbing and vertical ascents. It took me around four hours to do 50km, and I realised

I managed to change my flight to Tuesday. I rode until 7pm, checked into an Auberge and saw my Portuguese friends again. They invited me to dinner and convinced me to ride with them to Muxia, then carry on to Fisterre. The riding was relaxed and lots of fun, we spent more time stopping for beer and breakfasts. In Muxia, after a few pics, I headed for Fisterre. It was hot and I didn't feel like riding another 45km. My legs were tired from all those hills. Thankfully, the

route was fairly flat and the scenery beautiful – the Spanish countryside is so pretty.

I arrived late afternoon and my plan was to ride to Cape Finisterre, to the Okm mark, at around 9.30pm when the sun sets. It is difficult to explain the emotion I felt when I finally reached it. The evening was stunning and the sunset was as beautiful as the hotel concierge described. I made it! It felt quite emotional to be standing there feeling almost completely surrounded by the ocean. This was the missing link that completed my Camino and I was ecstatic that I didn't give up. 🌀

We wanna hear about your #radride, email [paul@electricink.co.za](mailto:paul@electricink.co.za)