

# SEPTEMBER 2015

# HELLO WORLD













Summer is a lovely time of lush promise and the perfect time for a walk with poppies and wildflowers in bloom. A getaway, a vacation, a rest, a break from work and an overall retreat from daily life. A celebration of nature, people, history and how grand life can be!

My family's vacation this year was spent walking stretches of the Camino de Santiago for 11 days. An ancient pilgrim's trail, the Camino flows from many starting points – including France and England – through northern Spain to the city of Santiago de Compostela, where the remains of St. James are said to be buried. People have been walking the route for centuries, meeting fellow travelers on the trail. Many books have been written about the journey, including one by Nancy Frey called **Pilgrim Stories**: **On and Off the Road to Santiago**. We had the wonderful experience of having Nancy, her husband, Jose, (and their son Sam) as our guides with their unique group, On Foot In Spain. Recently, the Camino was documented on the big screen in the movie "The Way".

From Roncesvalles to Santiago de Compostela, through wheat fields and vineyards, up mountains and across mud trails, modern vistas and Roman ruins, we did a lot of walking during the trip. It was a joy to walk into a village and then proceed straight through to a fantastic hotel. The Paradors are a profitable state-run enterprise, often located in castles, palaces, fortresses, convents, monasteries and other historic buildings. The Hostal dos Reis Católicos is considered to be one of the oldest continuously operating hotels in the world.

I learned a number of things. After an eight-mile walk in 90 degrees, soaking your feet in a Roman pool can be a shocker! When the temperature rises to 95 degrees, fill your hat with cold water, put it on and keep walking. Try new things – simple picnic lunches are delicious, particularly when dished up outdoors. Walking through a thunder and lightning storm makes you walk faster. Generally, if you talk with people, they will talk to you. I also learned from Sam, Nancy's young son, that the most important thing a boss can do is to bring in donuts for the staff.

Many wonderful memories were created, and we returned full of life.

I'm happy to report that our debit and credit cards worked beautifully in Spain. A contract has been signed to bring you chip/PIN cards in early 2016, providing increased security. There are many months of testing ahead, but before you know it, new chip/PIN cards will be issued. Meanwhile, use our Visa® debit and credit cards for travel. No foreign exchange fees plus a great slate of Visa card benefits make our cards a smart choice.

Steve Bowles CEO/CFO



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# Office Hours

Monday through Friday 9 AM to 4 PM