

Online Appendices: Resources for Pilgrimage Planners

For use with *Camino Close to Home* by Rob Fennell (Novalis Publishing, 2023)

Expectations and Overview

This document is provided to potential registrants so that they know some of our expectations as organizers before they sign up to participate. This is the 2021 version, when we co-presented the pilgrimages as “The Gaels’ Trail” with the Department of Gaelic Affairs, Province of Nova Scotia, in Cape Breton Island.

Expectations and Overview: Camino Nova Scotia (2021 version)

Pilgrim Virtues (Strengths)

- *Community*
- *Sharing*
- *Serving others*
- *Perseverance*
- *Prayer*
- *Reverence and care for creation*
- *Patience*
- *Simplicity*
- *Gratitude*

Pilgrimage is a special opportunity in our lives to reconnect with nature and with God. *Camino Nova Scotia: Slighe nan Gàidheal/The Gaels’ Trail* is designed specifically to provide times for personal growth and spiritual nurture, even in the midst of a physical challenge.

Please note that this program is *not* designed to provide you with a personal holiday. It is *not* a trip or a tour, but a pilgrimage experience. When you sign up for *Camino Nova Scotia: Slighe nan Gàidheal/The Gaels’ Trail*, please be aware that you are asked to become part of a temporary community, sharing life and conversation with your fellow pilgrims. Not everything will be perfectly as you would like it; therefore, negotiating differences, being patient with each other, and putting up with some inconveniences are realities shared by all of us.

We start our walk each day as a group. We leave together at the same time, and we find the trail together. After that, we walk at our own pace. There is no rush.

We meet for a **brief time of prayer each morning and evening** as a whole group. Attendance is optional, but you are encouraged to join in. Opportunities for prayer and reflection throughout the day are plentiful. At the end of the day, we also have about an hour to **check in** and talk about our experiences, thoughts, and feelings about the day that has ended.

Overnight accommodations are indoors (church or community halls) along the way. As such, **please note** that sleeping arrangements are rustic and communal. Participants need to bring a sleeping bag and mat. A limited number of air mattresses are available from Camino Nova Scotia staff. Each site has electricity, running water, and restrooms.

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Fitness is important, but you don't have to be an athlete. If you can currently walk 1 to 2 hours without needing a rest break, you can work your way up to the pilgrim's pace of 6 to 8 hours of walking each day (approx. 25 km). Training ahead of time is important!

Chores and helping each other are part of being in community. Assisting with food preparation, tidying up, loading the van, etc., all help to make the event go more smoothly. Everyone is expected to help.

Rest whenever you like. *Camino Nova Scotia: Slighe nan Gàidheal/The Gaels' Trail* is a mobile retreat: a time away from our ordinary work and responsibilities, giving us time to reflect and refocus on what is important. Taking care of our bodies is important too.

*****COVID-19 continues to be a concern. Every participant in Camino Nova Scotia: Slighe nan Gàidheal/The Gaels' Trail must receive a COVID-19 vaccination before their pilgrimage walk begins. We have planned the 2021 pilgrimage dates in line with the schedule for vaccination rollouts in Canada.**

**THANK YOU for reading through this overview.
It helps everyone to know what to expect.
Please keep a copy of this document for your records.**

What happened to a world in which we can sit
with the people we love so much
and have slow conversations
about the state of our heart and soul,
conversations that slowly unfold,
conversations with pregnant pauses and silences
that we are in no rush to fill?
How did we create a world in which we have
more and more and more to do
with less time for leisure,
less time for reflection,
less time for community,
less time to just... be?

—Omid Safi¹

¹ Omid Safi, "The Disease of Being Busy," November 6, 2014, <https://onbeing.org/blog/the-disease-of-being-busy/>