



## What is a Pilgrimage?

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What is a pilgrimage?

A pilgrimage is the act of deliberate travel; traveling outside while traveling within.

It is a chance to reconnect with the earth, to listen, to face your inner self, to actively commune with a greater power.

A pilgrimage is a refuge from the din and clutter of the outside world.

It is a unique dimension to appreciate life's wonder and revel in its minutiae.

It is the heady aroma drifting from fields of thyme, or the drone of bees in a sun-dappled forest.

It is autumn frost blanketing a multi-hued trail, and the rough grain of your walking stick rubbing against your palm.

A pilgrimage is time devoted purely to the present. There is no past, no future, only now.

Your world is your breath, a heartbeat reverberating in your ears, a Zen-like placing of each footstep along a well-trod path.

A pilgrimage is a trampoline for the mind, a purging of the soul.

It is a thousand small moments. It is unexpected acts of kindness and fleeting revelations.

It is surrendering to fate, spontaneity, absolute unknown, and small arrows that mark your way.

A pilgrimage is a solitary journey.

Yet as you traverse this portal between past and present, you pay homage to those who have gone this way before while leaving your essence for those who pass long after you are gone.

A pilgrimage is traveling lightly.

Just as you leave most of your worldly belongings behind, on the trail there is a gentle unraveling of fears, emotions, desires and demons as you surrender unwanted psychic baggage to the universe.

A pilgrimage is letting go, then discovering, and in truth be found.

A pilgrimage is peace personified, one deliberate step at a time. When serenity is found within, how long can our world remain without?

Each pilgrim's journey is unique. It can never be repeated.

Yet it continues long after we return home to distant shores.

It is my passion, my reason for being. This is one pilgrim's journey.

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Brandon Wilson is a Lowell Thomas Award-winning author/photographer/explorer. In 2006, he and a friend founded a pilgrim's path following the route of the First Crusades from France to Jerusalem, naming it the Templar Trail. Their adventure is told in Brandon's book, *Along the Templar Trail: Seven Million Steps for Peace*, named 2009 Best Travel Book by the Society of American Travel Writers. He has walked many long distance pilgrim paths, including: the Camino de Santiago Frances (twice), the Via de la Plata, the Camino Catalan and Camino Aragonés in Spain, the Via Francigena from Canterbury, England to Rome, and St. Olav's Way across Norway. In 1992, he and his wife Cheryl became the first Western couple to hike an ancient Buddhist pilgrim route 650-miles across Tibet as chronicled in his IPPY award-winning book, *Yak Butter Blues*. His other books include: *Dead Men Don't Leave Tips: Adventures X Africa* and *Over the Top & Back Again: Hiking X the Alps*. They are available from Amazon.com or your favorite bookstore. Visit <http://www.pilgrimstales.com> for a preview and more.