Jesus and the **Plastic Bong**

An Anthology of Thru Hiker Folklore

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What on earth is thru hiking?

As defined by one informant, thru hiking is a backpacking trip > 1,000 miles'

We interviewed eight hikers across the Appalachian, Chilkoot, Colorado, El Camino de Santiago, and John Muir Trails

Most undertook their trip in young adulthood and the majority were male.



Traditional Traditions

Universal

Cairns

Trail names

Trail registers

Certificates

Particular

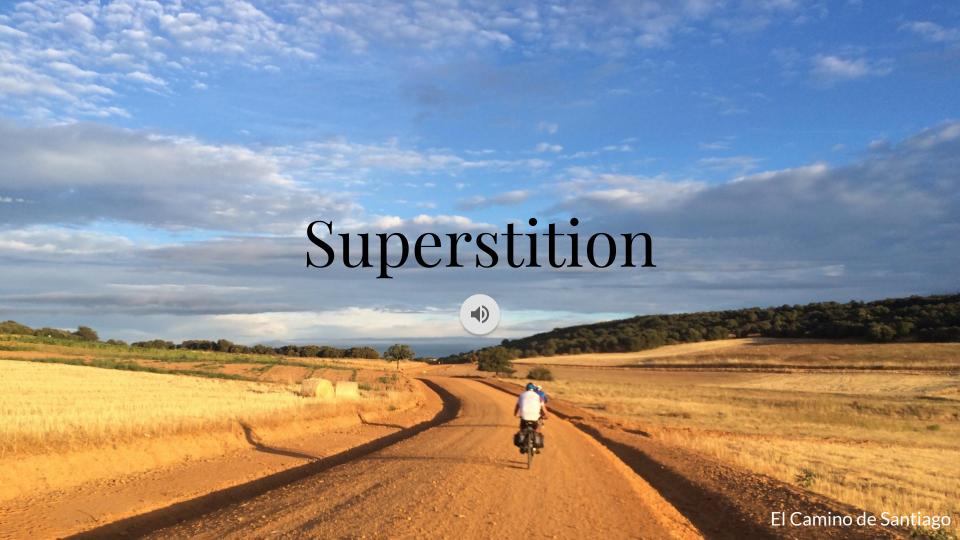
Jesus and the plastic bong

Shell of wine

Tour-a-grinos

"Buen camino"

99 bottles



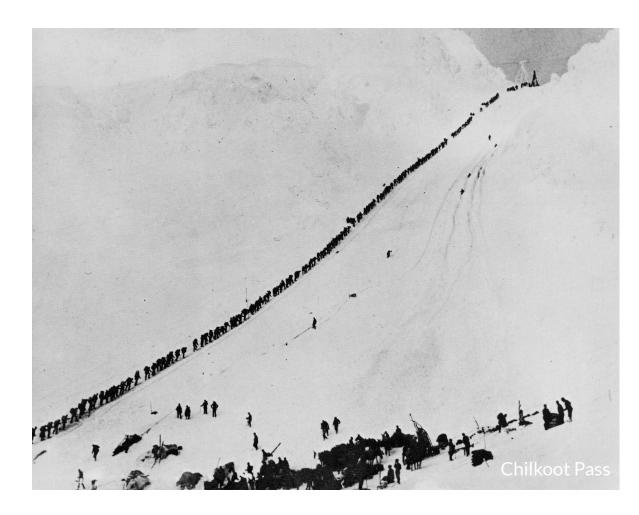
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Lucky hat

Old mallet

Hiking in the Morning

Limited by practicality: we had foolish notions





Mystic Mystery Materials

Scallop shells

Wedding rocks

Stuffed bear

Gold rush artifacts



Original Origins

El Camino de Santiago was a pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela

Chilkoot was created by Native Alaskans, then claimed by Gold Rushers

Appalachian, PCT, and Colorado were recreational from the start



Trail Names

Identity • Anonymity





RITES OF PASSAGE

Informants often undertook mentally and physically demanding thru hikes at points of transition



Thru hiker folklore facilitates: immersion reinvention actualization

