

MADRID

CITY TRAVEL REVIEW



BACKGROUND



If you think of Madrid as the unsophisticated big sister of Barcelona, or perhaps the dreary aunt of Ibiza, then you are very wrong. Home to 3.3 million people, the city of Madrid lies in the centre of Spain and has truly become the literal and symbolic heart of the country. It may not have one iconic grand building such as the Eiffel Tower or the Colosseum, where you might know in an instant where you are; but Madrid can give so much more to those who are willing to immerse themselves completely into what this beautiful city has to offer.

Food enthusiasts will be spoiled by the choices here and surprised by the generally low prices. Tantalised by tapas? Fascinated with fresh food markets? Delighted by delicate treats? If your answers are yes then Madrid is for you. Prepare your eyes, and your stomach, for the feast of a lifetime in Madrid.

The artists among you can stroll through grand halls and gaze at paintings by the likes of Goya, Picasso, Miro and El Greco; be swept up into centuries past and pulled in by the pictures depicted on the canvas. Madrid offers some of the best museums in the world, such as El Museo del Prado.

If you love to shop, look no further. Madrid provides everything from high-end boutiques and internationally known brands to stores that provide a true local charm and have been around for centuries.

Madrid is not just the Cultural Capital of Europe. It has its own lifestyle, an attitude carried by those who live here. Don't be fooled by their relaxed smiles and generally laid-back approach to life, madrileños love to party and know how to do it right. There is something for everyone, from live music and jazz to the grand international clubs. Delve into the city's nightlife and you will not be disappointed.

This guide seeks to point you in the direction of the best places to go to experience Madrid to its fullest and it is perfect for those who are travelling on a budget.

History of Madrid

It would be fair to say that the people of Madrid are friendly and most will welcome outsiders with open arms. It is not uncommon for a local to stop on the street to help a tourist find a location or for a waiter to recommend a great bar or nightclub for you to try after your meal. Of course, like with any large capital city, you should still be wary of yourself and your belongings; Madrid is fast approaching number one in Europe for pick-pocketing. In general, though, if you try to understand them and maybe charm them with your limited Spanish, a madrileño could become a very good friend. Their siesta/fiesta attitude might surprise you when you discover much of this great city's history that is enveloped in fighting and political unrest.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF MADRID

800: Madrid is occupied by Arabs, who name the city Mayrit in reference to its river. Mayrit gains importance, rivalling Toledo, and passes between the control of the Christians and Muslims many times.

1118: The same laws of Toledo are brought to and dictated in Madrid.

1561: Madrid becomes the capital of Spain when Philip II moves the court from Toledo.

1716-1788: Carlos III turns Madrid into a modern city, in line with other European capitals.

1833: Isabel II becomes the first and only female Spanish monarch of modern times. Tension rose between the monarchy and the military. Isabel abdicated in favour of her son in 1870, leading to revolts and the Spanish Civil War.

1979: The monarchy is restored and Juan Carlos I becomes King.

2004: March 11th, Madrid is attacked by terrorists who detonate bombs in busy Metro stations and trains. This tragic day saw the loss of 192 people with thousands injured.

800 1000 1200 1400 1600 1800 2000 Present

1083: Under the control of the Christian King Alfonso I, Madrid loses part of its cultural heritage when all Muslim symbols are abolished in the city.

1383: King John I of Castille names Leo VI of Armenia Lord of Madrid.

1480: The Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Spain is established to ensure the stability of the Catholic church and expelled Jews and Islamic people if they did not convert to Catholicism.

1875: Isabel's son Alfonso XII becomes the King of Spain and the country gains stability once again.

1939: Spain was taken over by Nationalist Francisco Franco, who interestingly, even Adolf Hitler did not like.

1992: Madrid is named as the Culture Capital of Europe.

Now: Global economic crisis sees enduring hardship. Governments aim to make drastic changes but groups such as Occupy Madrid continue protests against inequality. Rallies can still be seen in Puerta del Sol.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

There are many different festivals and events occurring in Madrid and its surrounding areas throughout the year. Here is a selection of what not to miss.

January: Día de los Reyes (The Three Kings Calvacade) Presents are exchanged whilst a procession and party occurs through the streets commemorating the three kings' pilgrimage to meet baby Jesus.

February: ARCO (Contemporary Art fair) Usually in the second week of February, promoting contemporary art throughout Madrid. It is Europe's largest art fair.

March/April: Semana Santa (Holy Week) Every town and city throughout Spain have momentous processions through packed streets. Toledo and Segovia are must visit towns for an unforgettable display.

May/June: Fiestas de San Isidro, the capital's patron saint. With half a month of neighbourhood parties, plays and concerts, the city is buzzing with life! Madrileños dress up in traditional costume and celebrate the event with a procession to the Emita de San Isidro. The event also marks the beginning of the bullfighting season.

July/August: Veranus de la Villa is an open-air festival across Madrid with a range of music and dance including opera, pop concerts, flamenco and much more.

September: La Noche de Blanco is part of Europe's annual White Night festival which began in Paris 2002. It brings a range of art and cultural performances to the capital many of which are free.

October/November: Festival de Otoño is the city's largest cultural festival including international theatre, jazz, dance and many other events.

December: Nochevieja (New Year's Eve) Annual celebration where madrileños welcome the New Year at the Puerta del Sol. When the clock strikes midnight, people attempt to swallow twelve *uvas* (grapes) between each chime. If they manage to do so successfully, it means they will have a prosperous year.



PHotoEspaña

Paseo de Castellana • 34 913 601 326 • <http://www.phe.es> • Metro: Colon

PHotoEspaña is an annual photography and visual arts festival that has been a major attraction in Spain since 1998. It runs throughout June until August and has created great international interest showing work from photographers such as Andy Warhol, Richard Avedon and many more.

The majority of the festival is situated throughout the Paseo de Castellana in the city centre of Madrid, with exhibitions located in places such as the picturesque botanical gardens beside the Prado. In terms of finding out about the exhibitions, you can check out the website to download the full festival map.

As well as the exhibitions there are many workshops, lectures and competitions in which you can involve yourself. If you have an avid interest in photography, there are book stalls set up at the end of the exhibitions for you to purchase books from famous photographers and artists featured within the exhibitions. It is a must for those with a keen interest in photography and the visual arts.

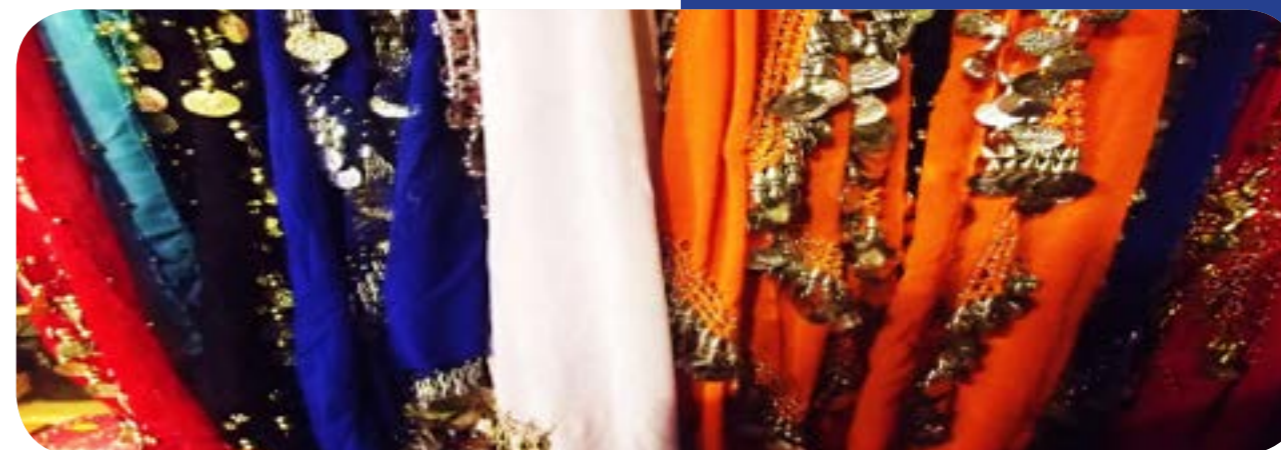
Bollymadrid

Plaza de Lavapiés • 91 522 30 25 • <http://www.bollymadrid.com> • Metro: Lavapiés

Madrid hosted the annual Bollymadrid Indian culture festival. The festival is situated in the Lavapiés neighbourhood, which is easily accessible via the metro stop of the same name.

When approaching the neighbourhood, you are overwhelmed with the rich scent of food and spices that transport you straight to the streets of Bangladesh. There are rows of food stalls lining the squares, serving culinary delights such as samosas, bhajis and various rice dishes - try one for just a euro!

Along with the vast range of Indian food to sample, there is entertainment running throughout the day, from English dance troops to Indian groups performing traditional dances. The costumes are mesmerising with both the male and female dancers wearing clothing saturated in rich colours and embellished with intricate beading and sequins. This provides a feast for all the senses and is an all round great day of entertainment, as well as providing some really tasty foods. So if you are looking to explore a diverse side to the culture in Madrid, Bollymadrid is for you.





The Effects of the Economic Crisis

In the midst of an economic crisis, European nations are feeling the harsh effects and difficult measures of their governments, straining their daily lives. Unemployment rates are high, poverty is on the rise, and times are very tough. Spain is one of the struggling countries with many unhappy people as protests and riots are on the rise.

Spain has the highest unemployment rate in Europe reaching a record of 21.3% with 4,910,200 jobless at the end of March 2012. Since the country is in a financial deficit (millions in debt), the government has taken intense measures to try to recover some of the money due to the corrupt political system and the travesties imposed by institutions. In turn, the citizens have to suffer with cuts made to their pension and salaries, unemployment benefits, and health and education benefits. There will be increases in price of the cost of pharmaceutical products, and emergency and hospital stays. In addition, there will be a rise in property taxes. Also, the elimination of many jobs and freezes to internal promotions will limit individual prospects.

For the first time in two centuries, the future of the people of Spain will live with more financial hardship than their forefathers. Over fifty percent of youth are unable to find jobs. Occupy Madrid is an international protest movement against economic and social inequality. The progress was inspired by the Spanish Indignant. Since 15 May 2011, many rallies have taken place or are ongoing. The Puerta de Sol in Madrid has become a symbolic meeting point for the protests. On that first day, 58 Spanish cities came together to express the injustice they felt impacting their lives. According to statistics (by RTVE), between 6.5 and 8 million Spaniards have participated in these marches, coming together to voice their opinions regarding their strong rejections on government approaches to their basic rights (home, health, education, work, and culture).



TOURISTSIGHTS



Madrid as a capital boasts some of the top tourist sights in Europe. Three of the world's best art museums are located on the Paseo del Arte - the Prado, the Thyssen-Bornemisza and the Reina Sofia, all within a few minutes walk from each other. The elegant Royal Palace, the impressive Plaza Mayor, the stalls in El Rastro market, and the shops surrounding Puerta del Sol are all must-see sights. The city is also surrounded by many green, spacious parks - a favourite for tourists and *madreliños alike*. Be prepared to be dazzled by this marvellous vibrant city and its sights.

Top 10 - Madrid's must see sights and experiences

Plaza Mayor

Madrid's historic main square since the 17th century. A great place to sit, people watch, drink and admire the stunning architecture surrounding it.

Palacio Real

The city's largest royal grand building with over 3,000 rooms and the official residence of the Spanish King Juan Carlos I.

Puerta del Sol

Madrid's most famous central square where the very centre of Spain 'Kilometro Cero' is marked with a plaque in front of the Casa de Correos. The place to be on NYE in Madrid.

Museo del Prado

One of the world's greatest art museums with paintings by Diego Velazquez and Francisco de Goya.

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia

The city's modern art museum featuring Picasso's Guernica.

Parque del Retiro

A spacious park in the city to relax. There's also a big lake where boats are available to hire.

Cava Baja, La Latina

Tapas hopping on a fun-filled street full of classic and contemporary bars.

El Rastro

A flea market selling everything from clothes to jewellery and antiques every Sunday morning in La Latina, attracting huge crowds of locals and tourists.

Catedral de la Almudena

Spain's main cathedral faces the Royal Palace and is enormous. Building started in 1883 and finished in 1993, very impressive.

Templo de Debod

A 4th century ancient Egyptian temple, originally stood on the banks of the Nile. Beautiful to visit at dusk when the sun is setting and shimmering in the pool.



Marvellous Madrid by bus

Madrid visitors bureau • Plaza Mayor 27 • 917 012 210 • www.esmadrid.com • 1 day ticket €20, 2 day ticket €24 • Mar-Oct 09:00-22:00, Nov-Feb 10:00-18:00

If your time is limited in Madrid the best way to see the city would be by the big red tourist bus which you can pick up from various points around town. The double decker bus follows a schedule that takes visitors to Madrid's main attractions and sights such as Museo Reina Sofia and Jardin Botanico. This allows you to hop on and off as you please so that you can explore the sights in more detail if you want, then hop on the next bus to carry on with the tour. Tickets can be purchased on the bus from the conductor or at any information kiosk in the city, the main information centre is located in Plaza Mayor. At present there are two routes: Modern Madrid and Historic Madrid - which take you to different locations. It's possible to start on one tour and hop onto the next.

If the complete route is taken without hopping off, its duration is 75 minutes. Buses pass each stop every 20 minutes which are clearly marked outside each of the 29 major attractions. Tourists visiting Madrid for the first time might want to head to one of the major attractions such as Palacio Real to catch the bus, the bus stop is on the main road opposite the entrance. All passengers will receive a map and headphones (included in the price) to listen to the commentary about all the sights, which is available in 8 different languages. Some discount vouchers may also be given for entrance to some of the attractions. Make sure to get a seat on the top deck for awesome views of the city.

My Madrid Free Tour

62 66 70 300 • info@mymadridfreetour.com • www.mymadridfreetour.com • Reservations not required

Venture into the heart of Spain at the Puerta del Sol and there you will find the symbol of Madrid- *La Osa y el Madroño* (The Bear and the Madroño Tree), the statue depicts a bear on her hind legs reaching into the tree to eat the fermented fruit. This bear wants to party just like all the other *madrileños*, and it serves as the meeting spot for My Madrid Free Tour. Every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday, an enthusiastic guide meets any and all interested travelers at this iconic statue at 11:30 to embark on a 3 hour walking tour of Madrid's main sites all for FREE. See La Plaza Mayor, Palacio Real, Teatro Real, and other crucial sites in the centre of Madrid. It is a great way to get a feel for the city and learn a bit of the seedier bits of history along the way. Hear about Queen Isabella's promiscuous past and revel in the pretentious nature of the Bourbons. Tours are in Spanish and English. Tips encouraged.



Palacio Real

Calle Bailen, Plaza de Oriente • www.patrimonio-nacional.es • €3 - €5 • Metro: Opera

A trip to Madrid would not be complete without a visit to the Royal Palace. Located to the West of the Plaza de Oriente, this piece of sensational Baroque architecture is almost overwhelming at first. Although the Palace never quite reached the scale hoped for, it is by no means disappointing.

Stepping into the Palace courtyard, you will find yourself surrounded by this all-encompassing building on three sides and a great view of the Cathedral behind you. Head over the arch-covered walkway to your left and marvel at the panoramic views of the Royal gardens and the west of the city. On this side of the Palace, head into the Royal Armoury in the far corner. When you are finished here it will bring you back up to the courtyard. From here, head inside and walk up the grand staircase and prepare your eyes to bear witness to what is to come.

Each room in the visit is simply exquisite. Fresco paintings cover most of the ceilings, accompanied by lavish chandeliers, each one different. The walls are covered with fine fabrics dripping in rich, vibrant colours and details; not to mention the banquet room with its dining table that can seat over 100 people at one time. Words cannot do justice to the extravagance of these rooms; it really must be experienced in person. Unfortunately there are rooms not open to the public, such as the Royal Library, but make sure to visit the Royal Infirmary and Chapel on your visit.

The Royal Palace is so luxurious that the Royal family only stay in it when there are State ceremonies and functions, choosing to stay in more modest surroundings on the outskirts of Madrid. Nonetheless, it truly is a home fit for a King.



Tickets: Head to the side entrance of the Palace, next to the Cathedral, and purchase your tickets. Depending on if you are an EU citizen, ID must be provided, your visit may be free at certain times. It currently stands that Wednesday and Thursdays between 6-8pm are free for EU citizens. Reduced rates are offered for concessions and students. Once inside the gift shop, you have the option of purchasing an audio guide for your visit at an extra €4. These guides are available in German, Spanish, French and English. Please note, you will normally be required to leave your ID at the audio desk until you return the guide.



The Royal Armoury

While most visitors to the palace are entranced by the ornately brocaded ceilings of the Royal Palace, the Royal Armoury brings the Medieval ages to life in a way tapestries and twinkling chandeliers cannot. Housed on the northeast side of the Plaza de la Armería, this stunningly massive collection displays the personal armoury collections of Charles V and his son, Phillip II. This significant compilation of gleaming suits of armour, intricate shields, long lances, crossbows, swords and more, effectively embody the ever-present obsession with chivalry in Spain. Beginning in the 13th century a shift from purely militaristic training to public spectacles and games, such as jousting, occurred. By the 15th century, armour was more than a means of protection; it symbolized aristocratic power and wealth.

Knights mount the fully decked out horses on the first floor of the exhibit, lances raised spurring them onward to face the worthy opponent across the way. An energy hangs in the air amongst the warm walls and for a moment, it seems as though you can almost feel the horses' breath as you walk by, waiting for the surprisingly inanimate objects to move. The armour displays the craftsmanship of respected workshops in Southern Germany, Northern Italy, Flanders and further. Black suits of armour crafted in the orient mix in bits of gold and include a helmet permanently affixed with a twisted smile.

On the lower level, Phillip II suits of armour from childhood stand erect as a frivolous symbol of the Spanish power during this Golden age. Shields used only for parades display intricate scenes of the trials of Hercules, a favourite god among the Spanish. So supplement chandeliers with some shields and swords and your visit to the Royal Palace will be complete.



Plaza Mayor

Plaza Mayor 27 • 915 88 16 36 • Metro: Sol

The Plaza Mayor is a must visit when in Madrid. One of Spain's best loved squares, it is rectangular in shape, measuring 129 by 94 metres surrounded by three-storey buildings with 237 magnificent balconies. Notice the cobblestone pavements which fill the Plaza and the bright frescoes that adorn the Casa de la Panadería (bakery). In the centre there is a statue of King Philip III who commissioned the Plaza's construction. Fires were a common problem during the 16th and 17th centuries in Spain and the Plaza was burnt down numerous times during these periods, as wood was the main construction material. After a great fire in 1790, the present Plaza Mayor was built of brick and stone and is still standing after nearly 400 years. It was designed in 1691 by Juan Gomez de Mora.

The Plaza has nine entrance ways and was once Madrid's main Plaza where a range of events took place, such as, pageants, markets, theatre, bullfights, religious processions and even trials and executions, particularly under the Spanish Inquisition. Today it is a major tourist attraction in the centre of the city with a number of restaurants and shops, but be careful as these restaurants are quite pricy and not as authentic as the countless others outside and around the Plaza.

Take note: this major tourist attraction is a pickpockets paradise, so watch your bag! Also, if you really admire the Plaza, you can buy a one bedroom apartment at the average price of €1 million!



Puerta del Sol

Plaza de la Puerta del Sol 5 • 915 21 05 04 • www.madrid.es • Gratis • Metro: Sol

This central venue in the heart of Madrid is represented by the spacious Plaza de la Puerta del Sol (the gate of the sun). The eastern gate of the city in the 15th-century is nowadays frequently crowded by tourist groups and people who are crossing the way to go to work, discover the city or to go shopping. The most conspicuous monument in this square is the Casa de Correos, where the local government of Madrid is based. As the name indicates, it was built in 1768 as the main post office of Madrid. On the top is enthroned a clock in a small tower, which is used to welcome the New Year. As a tradition thousands of *madrileños* eat here at midnight 12 grapes for every sounded chime, to start with a good mood and a bag of luck in the New Year. It is thought that, if you are not able to gobble all of them up in time, you will quite certainly have a miserable year. So hurry up if you want to join this amusing tradition.

Moreover you can gaze the memorial statue of King Carlos III sitting astride a horse in the middle of the plaza and take a relaxing seat at the two flowery fountains. The remarkable symbol of Madrid is demonstrated by a statue of the bear who pinched fruit from a *modroño* tree. This is the meeting point for a remarkable daily free walking tour through the capital. The last touristy stop in the square is a plaque in front of the Casa de Correos which

marks the Kilometre Zero. That is the important point where the Spanish main roads are measured from.

During the 2008-2012 economic crisis in Spain the Puerta del Sol is grown to the main political spot for demonstrations and boycotts. Since May 2011 thousands of peeved people have come here together to protest against the governmental cuts and unemployment in the whole of Spain.



Useful Phrases

Meeting People

Hello- ¡Hola!
 Goodbye- ¡Adiós!
 Please- Por favor
 Thank you- Gracias
 Yes/No- Sí/No
 Excuse me- Perdón
 Sorry- Lo siento
 Do you speak English?
 ¿Habla inglés?
 Do you understand?
 ¿Me entiende?
 Yes, I understand.
 Si, entiendo.
 Could you please speak slower?
 ¿Puede hablar más despacio por favor?
 Where are the...?
 ¿Dónde hay...?

Practical

Who?- ¿Quién/Quiénes?
 What?- ¿Qué?
 When?- ¿Cuándo?
 Where?- ¿Dónde?
 Why?- ¿Por qué?
 How?- ¿Cómo?
 How much?- ¿Cuántos?
 How much is it?
 ¿Cuánto cuesta?
 I'd like to change some money
 Quería cambiar dinero.

Numbers

0- cero	16- dieciséis
1- uno	17- diecisiete
2- dos	18- dieciocho
3- tres	19- diecinueve
4- cuatro	20- veinte
5- cinco	21- veintiuno
6- seis	22- veintidós
7- siete	23- veintitres
8- ocho	24- veinticuatro
9- nueve	25- veinticinco
10- diez	26- veintiséis
11- once	27- veintisiete
12- doce	28- veintiocho
13- trece	29- veintinueve
14- catorce	30- treinta
15- quince	100- cien

Days

Monday - lunes
 Tuesday - martes
 Wednesday - miércoles
 Thursday - jueves
 Friday - viernes
 Saturday - sábado
 Sunday - domingo

Transport

What time does the...leave?
 ¿A qué hora sale el...?
 Is this taxi available?
 ¿Está libre este taxi?
 Please put the meter on.
 Por favor, ponga el taxímetro.
 How much is it to...?
 ¿Cuánto cuesta ir a...?
 Please take me (to this address).
 Por favor, llévame (a esta dirección.)

Food

breakfast - desayuno
 lunch - almuerzo
 dinner - cena
 snack - tentempié
 bar - bar
 cafe - café
 coffee bar - cafetería
 restaurant - restaurante

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Introduction to the Guide, History and background of Madrid, Palacio Real, Teatro Real, Toledo, Teatro Joy Eslava, Juicy Avenue, Taberna la Aguja, Practical Information, Map

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