PÁSE LO BIEN EN MADRID
Contributors:
Yvonne Bäumer  Freddie Holmes  Neha Vyas
Amy Brawn  Harriet Keep
Leanne Burke  Amanda Rowland
Rory Giles  Ellie Russell

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Initially named ‘Mayrit’ (or Margerit) by Emir Mohammed of Cordoba in the year 854, Madrid was chosen by King Felipe II as the capital of Spain in 1561, which was previously Toledo. Although now a leading European city it began relatively small in scale; with only a few notable medieval churches, such as St Jerome and the Bishops Chapel still standing. These structures were dotted around an area primarily populated by white-washed housing and minimal decor. This started to change in the 17th century with escalated efforts to expand and compete on a European stage. King Carlos III who began his reign in 1759 created many of Madrid’s most iconic structures such as the Palacio Real Madrid (Royal Palace of Madrid) and thus aided in creating the Madrid of today; one that is encapsulating.

The first half of the 20th Century saw Spain fall under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco who controlled Spain from 1939 to his death in 1975. Through acts, such as sending aid to the German front during the Second World War, Spain was isolated economically for a period of time after the war ended. As Franco aged, censorship began to relax and people began to protest widely in rebuke of this dictator’s political stance. Protests and demonstrations equally became an important factor of the Spanish financial crisis of 2008. The protests, collectively known as the 15M movement or the Spanish Revolution, was a globally publicised event in which the popular district of Puerta del Sol became the home of thousands of protestors in 2011; a feat mimicked across the country. People of all walks of life joined together to take a stand against the rising unemployment rate which as of January 2014 is estimated to be 26% - as well as other issues ranging from homelessness to welfare. With places such as the Tabacalera, Madrid houses many places that aid in the free practice of arts and allow those who are unemployed or without a home to find comfort within it.

The rich and continuous history of Madrid is palpable simply by walking down a street, or visiting a park or museum; thus ensuring that it is a vital and exhilarating member of Europe.

Let’s Begin.

Restaurants
Tragatapas
La Taurina
Restaurante Botin

Tapas
El Tigre
Mercado de San Miguel

Bars
Kapital
Sandemans Bar Crawl
El 13 Triball
Palentino
Terral
La Azotea del Circulo de Bellas Artes
Salsa
Public Transport in Madrid.

Madrid has an efficient public transport system that is easy to use and understand. The Metro and bus system are integrated so you can buy a ticket (available at stations, news-stands or tobacconists) to use on both.

You can get singles (€1.50 for a five station trip, €2.00 for zone A), ten trip tickets (10 viajes, €12.20) or unlimited travel passes for 1 day (€8), 2 days (€13.40), 3 days (€17.40), 5 days (€25.50), or 7 days (€33.40). Ticket machines are in multiple languages, including English. Traveling to or from airport stations requires an additional charge of €3 payable at the entrance or exit.

The Metro is open from 6am to 1:30am. Metro lines do not split like those on the London Underground, so you simply have to know in which direction you need to travel. If you will be in Madrid for a long time, you can get a public transit card (Tarjeta Transporte Público). You can fill out an application at a station – make sure to bring your passport with you. You can then load your travel plans onto the card.

They also remove the additional charge when traveling to/from airport stations.

The buses cover whatever areas the Metro doesn’t and a night bus (Búhos or “night owls”) runs from 1am to 5:30am, traveling on the same routes as the Metro. Their main hub is at Plaza de Cibeles. The trains and buses are quite spacious and the trains are also air-conditioned. Buskers come into the carriage every now and then and they are quite good. Beggars also frequent the metro and it is difficult to tell if they are opportunists or in genuine need of help. Donate if you wish.

For information and advice check out the Madrid Metro website (http://www.metromadrid.es/ en/) or public transport information website (http://www.ctm-madrid.es/). The customer service number is 902 444 403 or 917 796 399.
Declared Bien de Interés in 1956, Puente de Toledo (or the Bridge of Toledo) is quite simply a cultural charm. Linking the Pyramides roundabout on the east bank, with the Marqués de Vadillo square, it is about 5 minutes walking distance from each Metro station. Arching over the stunning Manzanares river, the baroque bridge and its cylindrical pillars are steeped in history. The bridge’s central shrines exhibit statues of San Luis Labrador and Santa Maria de la cabeza. For years many people believed that the body of this Saint had healing powers, and the Spanish Royal family were no exception. In fact, when Felipe III was severely ill with a fever after returning from Portugal he was forced to stay in Casarubios del Monte, in Toledo. The town organised a healing procession for the Monarch as the body of the Saint was transferred to the town. But regardless of what one chooses to believe, Puente de Toledo is a strikingly beautiful work of architecture, and whether you’re seeking to piece together parts of the town’s history, or simply enjoying a peaceful walk at sunset, there are few places as remarkably beautiful.

For those looking for a taste of Madrilenean history, the Palacio Real de Madrid, or Royal Palace, is an outrageously opulent treasure trove, ideal for spending a morning or an afternoon exploring the official residence of the Spanish Royal Family.

The palace in itself is huge, but the grounds also include the royal armouries and spacious gardens, in which visitors can wander at their leisure.

When exploring the palace, visitors can choose to make their own interpretation of the rich tapestries and carpeted passageways, or for those who wish to know about each room in detail, audio guides are available at the front desk for €4, in English, Spanish and many other languages. Although the palace is host to a plethora of different rooms, each has its own unique character and fascinating story behind it.

There are also some stunning views to be enjoyed from different points around the inner courtyard and it is well worth making the use of your camera here, as taking photos is frowned upon inside the palace itself.

If looking to enjoy beautiful architecture steeped in history and pick up some interesting information along the way, don’t hesitate to pay the Royal Palace a visit.

**General Information**

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**Address:** Glorieta de Marques de Vadillo

**Nearest Metro Station:** Pyramides or Marques de Vadillo

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**Location:** Calle Bailén, s/n, 28071 Madrid

**Nearest Metro Station:** Calle del Arenal, Palacio Real

**Phone:** +34 914 54 87 00

**Website:** [http://www.patrimonionacional.es/](http://www.patrimonionacional.es/)

**Opening Times:**

**Royal Palace:**
- (Oct-Mar) Every day 10:00am - 18:00pm
- (Apr-Sept) Every day 10:00am - 20:00pm

**Gardens:**
- (Oct-Mar) Every day 10:00am - 18:00pm
- (Apr-Sept) Every day 10:00am - 20:00pm

**Entry:**
- Basic Fee: 10 €
- Guide: 4 €
- Audioguide: 4 €
Plaza del Dos de Mayo.

An uprising in 1808 orchestrated by the people of Madrid against French occupation transformed this modest square into a Madrileño symbol of resistance and patriotism.

Located in the barrio of Malasaña, a short walk from Bilbao Station, Plaza del Dos de Mayo—Plaza 2nd May—sits regally within a relaxed park-like location. As the evening sets in a vast number of bars and restaurants scattered around the structure, which was erected in 1869, begin to buzz; boasting many traditional Spanish delicacies as well as reasonably priced tapas bars.

Pretty ideal for a friday night. With a vibrant youth scene it is a must see for those wanting to explore Malasaña’s nightlife. During the day, the Plaza’s beauty is enhanced by the sizzling Spanish sunshine with an enthusiasm to visit shared both by tourists and local residents. The statue, created by Antonio Solá in 1822, depicts two figures in battle and gleams grandly under the heat. With a Gelataria across the street that no doubt helps daily visitors combat the sun, Plaza del Dos de Mayo really is a gem of Madrid.

Puente de Segovia.

Boasting magnificent views of the royal palace and the Almudena Cathedral, Puente Segovia is the oldest surviving bridge in the city, and owes its design to Juan de Herrera, King Phillip II’s architect of choice. It was built between 1582 and 1584 and is constructed from granite brick. The nickname of the bridge, ‘Puente de los suicidas’ (or, ‘suicide bridge’) conveys its dramatic history as Spain’s answer to Romeo and Juliet’s antidote. The bridge stretches over the Manzanares river and its glass walls were erected to prevent star-crossed lovers into the void in an attempt to seal their forbidden love. According to legend, a lady of notable class took the plunge from Puente Segovia after her father forbade her union with a poor farmer. Her unlikely survival branded her with the nickname ‘Mary Poppins’, as local Spaniards delight in the idea that her dress was so large that it came into contact with a nearby tree and impeded the fall. Whatever one chooses to believe, the bridge’s rich history has given it iconic status, and today it endures as one of Madrid’s most popular and treasured symbols.
If you’re visiting Madrid for longer than a weekend, it might be worth your while exploring the areas outside the city as well. Aranjuez is a prime example of a perfect mini day trip if you wish to escape the busy streets and crowds of people. A town famous for its monuments and beautiful scenery, you can be in Aranjuez in only 40 minutes if you catch the train from the Atocha Renfe station. Alternatively, you can book a half-day tour, which takes you by coach. (see bottom of page for details)

Once you get there, visit the Palacio Real de Aranjuez, a stunning royal residence surrounded by glorious gardens steeped in romantic legends and Greek folklore. It makes for an enjoyable afternoon to wander through the gardens, which are full of carefully arranged flowerbeds, maze-like hedges and ornate fountains, each of which tells a different tale. It is well worth getting a tour guide, as an astonishing amount of detail can be garnered from listening to the history of the town and its buildings.

Aside from the Royal Palace there are numerous other old buildings of interest and public parks and gardens to enjoy. You can also head to the old part of town for a drink and something to eat. Why not download Joaquin Rodrigo’s Concierto de Aranjuez to listen to as you explore? The three-movement concerto was inspired by the Royal Palace and its gardens!

**General Information**

Aranjuez Half Day Tour:
Duration: 4 hours
Departs from: Plaza de Espana 7, Madrid.
Languages Available: English/Spanish
Website: http://www.city-discovery.com/madrid/tour.php?id=7567

Available: Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 15:00pm

Prices: Adult €49, Child €26
Convent Cookies.

A tale of ghosts and cookies.

Have you ever bought cookies from a nun? No? Well, this is your chance and you shouldn’t miss out on it when you visit Madrid.

There are five or six nuns, dressed up as phantom nuns who sell one of the best cookies in Madrid in the Convento de Corpus Cristi in the historic heart of Madrid.

They are real catholic nuns who are not allowed to have any contact to the outside because of their religion, so they make these cookies, cakes and sweets for a living.

If you go there you just have to ring the top doorbell (the sign says "Monjas"). You may have to be patient and ring a few times until anyone answers and when they do just say you want to buy cookies and they’ll open the door for you.

But, be careful – the door is not as high as it looks like! When you enter you may expect a dark hall but instead you’ll find yourself in a bright garage. Now follow the sign “Torno” (lathe). When you are there you really have to concentrate on what the nuns saying and your Spanish should be good.

But in the end it is worth a visit because the cookies are awesome, as they melt on your tongue. You should definitely try the Orange cookies which are a bit refreshing, too.

If you don’t want to buy cookies from a nun there is also a shop but the cookies there are made by nuns from a different convent.

Address: Convento de Corpus Cristi
Calle del Codo
28005 Madrid

* look for the little door with an intercom

General information
Located on Calle Doctor Cortezo 1, near Sol, the Independance club hosts a Salsa night every Monday night from 10pm – 5:30 am. If you have never tried Salsa before then don't be nervous – this is a good introduction for newbies! Do try and arrive on time however – if you miss the introduction it can be hard to get the hang of it and catch up with everyone else. Salsa is a couples dance featuring a leader and a follower (though this does not mean that the roles are completely fixed during a dance). This does not mean that you have to go with a partner – you can ask someone at the club. This is a great way to meet new people. Don’t worry about feeling self-conscious or embarrassed, everyone else is focusing on their dancing. Salsa is an excellent choice if you are looking for something a little bit different. Independance also hosts several other club nights with a variety of DJs and music genres available to experience, as well as live music by a variety of bands and musicians. Non-Salsa club nights are Thursday, Friday and Saturday from midnight to 6am. From Puerta del Sol, walk down Calle de Carretas. Simply keep walking and you will eventually come onto Calle Doctor Cortezo 1, 28014, after crossing the street twice and find yourself at Independance.

General Information
Address: Calle Doctor Cortezo 1, 28014, Madrid
Nearest Metro Station: Sol
Website: http://independanceclub.com/

General Information
Address: Calle del Sacramento, 11 CP-28005, Madrid
Nearest Metro Station: Opera
Phone: 915 473 624
Opening Hours: 8:30- 13:00 and 18:00- 20:00
Mass: 9:30 and 19:30 apart from Saturdays
Templo de Debod.

Transport yourself back to the time of the Pharaohs with an excursion to the Madrileños’ diamond in the rough – ‘Templo de Debod’ is a magnificent Egyptian temple rebuilt here in Madrid’s own Casa De Campo.

Originally built 15km south of Aswan, Southern Egypt – the stunning structure was a gift of gratitude from the Egyptian State for Spain’s help in saving the Egyptian temples of Abu Simbel.

Whether you’re fascinated by its documented history, the carvings of Egyptian hieroglyphics, or simply have simply come to admire the view – the architecture takes on a life of its own at sunset and is a simply stunning location to enjoy a bottle of wine and a picnic after a siesta.

Beautifully illuminated in the evenings, the beautiful reflection on the water is striking and the view from the hillside offers an amazing panorama of the city skyline.

General information

Address: Calle Ferraz, 1, 28008 Madrid
Nearest Metro Station: Plaza de Espana
Phone: +34 913 66 74 15
Opening Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-2pm.
Website: madrid.es/templodebod