



# 50

shades *of*

# MADRID





Welcome to the City Travel Review Guide to Madrid. We have covered all the sides of this sultry city through our 50 Shades of Madrid. Our introduction serves as the first shade so you can get our take on this crazy capital and get yourself situated before adventuring through the city with us. There are 49 shades to follow so get ready to experience all aspects of Madrid as you plan your expedition or simply virtually experience the city from inside these pages. Enjoy!

## Introduction

# 1

Congratulations for having chosen one of the most captivating and diverse capitals of Europe for your travels! From the moment you touch down in Madrid, you are sure to be drawn in by the dynamic whirr of *madrileño* activity in no time flat.

And, believe me, life does not stop at night. After all, Madrid's nightlife is world famous! Aside from the natural, infectious party atmosphere that courses through the city's veins, there is a more practical reason for this nocturnal attitude. Especially during the summer months, temperatures in Madrid can reach a stifling 40°C, the air rarely cooling off before 17.00/18.00. It therefore seems rather sensible to restrict most activity to the later hours of the day and night, and to hold a siesta (what a gift to the world!) in the afternoon.

This brings us onto the lovely topic of geography. Now, class...no, don't worry – only joking! There *are* some interesting things to be said about Madrid's geographical location, though. For example, the city is bordered, in the Northwest, by the magnificent Sierra de Guadarrama mountain range, an ideal escape from the urban landscape for many of Madrid's inhabitants. Situated within this mountain range is also the Lozoya Valley, an area that boasts a rich biodiversity, such as the rare Spanish Imperial Eagle and even (it is thought) the Iberian lynx. Madrid also sits upon the Manzanares river, running both above- and underground, which allows for a breath of fresh air within the city.

As a tip for all you early birds, due to its geographical location, *madrileño* sunrises are particularly spectacular – imagine the sky coming alive with bursts of gold, yellow, orange and pink!

In terms of demography, Madrid is the third largest city in the EU, after London and Berlin. Its population can be split into two distinct areas: the actual city and the Comunidad de Madrid (Madrid Community). The former counts approx. 3.3 million inhabitants, whereas the latter, covering 8000 sq km around the city, exceeds 5 million. The population of Madrid is fantastically diverse, with a strong sense of acceptance. The motto is: 'if you live in Madrid, you are from Madrid!' The main religions are, amongst others, Christianity, Buddhism and Judaism, although there are many more faiths around. Thousands of immigrants are attracted to this multicultural city each year, countries represented including Morocco, Ecuador and China. As the seat of government and the residence of the Spanish monarch, Juan Carlos I, Madrid is also the political centre of Spain.

Finally, as this guide will tell you, Madrid has a fantastic range of cultural and other activities and sites for you to explore and enjoy, from museums and art galleries, to stadiums, parks, tours and much more! As Forrest Gump once so wisely said: "Life [or, in this case, Madrid] is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get". So what are you waiting for? Jump into this box and get into the spirit – Madrid awaits!

Muhammed I of Córdoba ordered the building of a small palace called the Alcázar and a surrounding fortress next to the River Manzanares. This river was called *al-Majrit* by the Moors, roughly meaning 'source of water' in Arabic. This eventually gave Madrid its name.

9th Century

Alfonso VI of León and Castile takes the citadel without a fight and consecrates the mosque, removing all Muslim symbols. The city never falls into Muslim hands again.

1085

The Black Death engulfs Spain and devastates the population of Madrid. Estimates put the death rate between 20-50% of the population.

1348

In a completely unexpected move, Felipe II establishes his permanent court in Madrid, moving the capital away from Toledo. The reason for this is still debated, as Madrid was relatively small and politically unimportant at the time. Many theories have been put forward, including that the King's wife found Toledo too humid for her hair!

1561

1600s

Felipe V is crowned, beginning the Bourbon dynasty that still rules Spain today.

1702

1734

Felipe V's successor Carlos II completes the Royal Palace. He generally modernises Madrid from being one of the dirtiest European cities to one of the cleanest.

1759-88

1808

The French are evicted from France and King Fernando VII is reinstated.

1813

Spain loses its remaining colonies, selling the Philippines to the US. Madrid's modernisation continues.

1898

1919

A cultural revival begins in Madrid, with writers all over the country flocking here. Famous artists and writers include Dali, Lorca, and Bruñuel, who are all based in Madrid at this time.

1920s

1931

**Timeline**

Madrid's population swells to 180,000 inhabitants from 30,000 the century before, making it the fifth largest city in Europe.

The Alcázar, the fort built by the Moors in the ninth century, burns down and plans for a new Royal Palace are made.

Napoleon's troops take Madrid and Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother, is made King of Spain. On the 2nd of May the *madrileños* rise up against the foreign rule but are brutally put down. This is famously captured by Goya in 'El dos de Mayo' de 1808 en Madrid that can be viewed in the Prado.

Madrid's first metro line starts running

Elections in 1931 pave way for a Republican-Socialist coalition, shortly after a republic is announced and the then King Alonso XIII flees the country.

Left-wing Frente Popular narrowly beats Francisco Franco's Falange party and he is duly exiled to the Canary Islands. The army, who supports right-wing parties, begin to mutiny. Franco returns and begins his advance from the south. By November, he was in Casa de Campo in the West of the city. Franco's forces begin a siege and bomb the city with artillery and German planes. The people of Madrid try to carry on with their daily lives throughout the continual bombardment.

1936-1939

1939

On the 28th March, after just under three years, the Madrid defenders decide to surrender.

1940s - 1950s

Franco embarks on a campaign of oppression to punish Madrid for its resistance. Tens of thousands of suspected Socialist and Nationalist sympathisers are arrested or killed. There is extreme economic hardship during this time, with international sanctions, because of Spain's involvement with Hitler.

1960s

Madrid, and Spain as a whole, experience an economic boom in the *años de desarrollo* (development years). Opposition to Franco finds a voice through the student body and the unions.

1973

Franco's designated successor and PM Admiral Carrero Blanco is assassinated by ETA.

1975

On the 20th November Franco, having been ill for some time, dies. Liberal optimism sweeps the country even though the officials loyal to Franco remain in control.

1975-8

A moderate supporter of Franco, Adolfo Suarez, becomes leader in 1976. With King Juan Carlos I, he pushes through political reforms. In 1977 elections were held, which Suarez's centre right party won, and they wrote a new constitution in collaboration with other political groups. Significant devolution occurs and the Madrid community is given great autonomy.

1980s

Cultural Revolution occurs in Madrid with drink, drugs and sex becoming suddenly more acceptable in what has been called *La Movida Madrileña*. This era produces creative talents such as Almodóvar. Mayor Enrique Tierno Galván presides over this period and embraces this new freedom.

2004

On the 11th March four bombs on trains explode in Madrid three days before a national election. In total 191 die and 1800 people are injured. ETA is originally blamed but Islamic terrorism is then found to be culpable.

2008-2012

The worldwide economic crisis has hit Spain especially hard due to many factors, but mainly because of the extreme reliance on property that Spanish growth has been based on. Youth unemployment is especially high in Spain compared with many European countries. However, levels of unemployment in Madrid are not as high as many places, at only 15% instead of nearer the 20% average nationwide. Protests are a near everyday occurrence in Madrid.



### Palacio Real

This sprawling display of Bourbon power stands erect as the largest Palace in Western Europe. Complete with a fully stocked royal armoury, a pharmacy and numerous priceless paintings to complement the impressive architecture, this building is certainly worth a visit.

### Puerto del Sol

Defined as the center of the city, this plaza used to house a large archway facing east and west that the sun would rise and set through, hence the name Puerta del Sol. Here you will find La Osa y El Madroño statue, the symbol of the city as well as numerous fountains and tour opportunities. It serves as a great point of departure for any exploration of the city. Open daily for tours.

### Plaza Mayor

A bustling plaza made for the people of Madrid not serves as a hub for many tourists trying to grab a bite to eat in an authentic feeling square. Avoid the restaurants here as they are over priced, but stroll around to soak up the Spanish sun and stop by the Tourist office if you are in need of a map or other helpful tidbits to enhance your vacation.

# 3

## Los Austrias, Centro, & Sol

Blending the historical past with the modern present, this neighbourhood thrives in the middle of Madrid, housing the roots of Catholicism in Madrid, the Royal Palace, and Plaza del Puerta del Sol, quite literally the heart of Madrid. It is here that tourist and natives will cross paths to experience some of the greatest things Madrid has to offer. Surrounded by the ceaseless sounds of city life, this neighbourhood oozes energy and allows any traveler to get a taste of Madrid that spans the centuries. Revel in the splendor left over from the Hapsburg Dynasty's rule from the 16th-18th centuries. Grab a bocadillo calamares at Plaza Mayor, the old local gathering spot for madrileños. Get a taste of all the flavors of Madrid in this essential starting point for any visit to the city.

## Salamanca

Salamanca stretches from the Paseo de Recoletos and Paseo de la Castellana to the Calle de Alcalá and Calle O'Donnell and is situated in the northeastern part of Madrid. The most high traffic (and high priced) streets are Serrano, Velázquez, and Goya. Named after Marqués de Salamanca, a Spanish nobleman, business man, and politician, this district is one of the most posh in Madrid. Some notable attractions include the Museo Lázaro Galdiano, the Fundación Juan March, and the Buen Retiro Park. It also contains the Museo de Escultura al Aire Libre, Plaza de Colón, and the Museo Sorolla. In Salamanca, you will find all the high fashion houses from Louis Vuitton to Valentino. Calle Goya is a particular shopping hotspot and some of the side streets like Calle Princesa offer more affordable options. In the district, there are also shopping centers like Galería ABC Serrano and smaller Spanish boutiques such as Adolfo Domínguez. In the nearby district of Chamberí (although most consider it part of Salamanca) you will find the Biblioteca Nacional de España, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Museo Romántico, Teatro de María Guerrero, and the Madrid Wax Museum. The barrio offers a variety of cuisine from North African to vegetarian. Some famous picks include El Amparo and Jockey and two of the best bars and tapas spots are Tasca la Farmacia and Estay.



## Top 3 Things to do in Salamanca

1. Chill out in the **Retiro Park** which can be accessed from Salamanca.
2. Visit the **Fundación Juan March Cultural Center**. Calle Castelló 77. Holds free concerts, exhibitions, lectures, and other cultural activities.
3. See the **Museo Lázaro Galdiano** which houses a variety of works and artistic mediums from a variety of famous artists from Goya to El Greco. Open daily except Tuesday 10:00-16:30, Sunday from 10:00-15:00. Admission €6, Guided evenings €8 by reservation, Reduced entry €3 (Students, seniors, large families, groups, disabled people), Free entry the last hour of opening, for the unemployed, and teachers. Metro: Ruben Dario, Gregorio Marañón, Nunez de Balboa, American Avenue.

# 4

## Chueca



Chueca, which is bordered by Calle de Fuenarral, Plaza de Alonso Martínez, Calle de Génova, Paseo de Recoletos and Gran Vía, is one of the most up-and-coming districts in Madrid. The barrio is an excellent place to go for a night out. Perhaps best known as the gay and lesbian district of Madrid, Chueca is an exciting place for all travelers and represents tolerance and diversity in the city. The area is comparable to London's Soho after its transformation from high-end area, to decay, and then back up to the hip list.

At times it is a bit over the top, but herein lies its unique charm. Perhaps this flamboyance is best embodied in the Sociedad General de Autores, a Gaudí style building that was originally a private mansion and is now home to a major copyright organization. The barrio also contains the Palacio de Justicia (Palace of Justice), Braganza Church, and Iglesia de San Antón. Galería Moriarty (Calle de la Libertad 22), a gallery important to the Movida Madrileña in the 1980s, displays a variety of artists' work and should definitely be seen in the district.

At the heart of the district is the Plaza de Chueca, which is a good starting point from which to explore the various bars and cafés in the barrio. Calle de la Libertad is one of the best streets for eating; Cíedel Piamonte is the place to go for accessories. In general, most of the nicer shops are on the eastern side of Chueca. El Tigre (Calle de Hortaleza 23 & 30) and Baco y Beto (Calle de Pelayo 24) are great spots for tapas and Boga Bar (Calle del Almirante 11) has excellent seafood.



# 5

## Chamberí & Argüelles

These two neighbourhoods are located just north of the city centre and are quickly developing a reputation for the premier place to live in Madrid. The areas are generally residential and classic tourist attractions are limited in number and but there is plenty to do and see here if you know where to look. Shopping is prevalent here with all major chain stores having a presence; furthermore, there are countless small boutiques that sell a variety of high quality produce. Examples include Antiguedades Hom (Calle de Juan de Austria 31, 91 594 20 17) that sells antique Spanish fans. Children's clothing can be found at Los Bedes de Chamberí (Calle de Gonzado de Córdoba). The attractions that can be visited include Templo de Debod and the fascinating Estación de Chamberí where an unused metro stop has been transformed into a museum.

# 6



