

MADRID

CITY TRAVEL REVIEW



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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.



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.
Sí, 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 cambiardinero.

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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