



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



alreza

Chillin' Like a Local

Madrid, 2 Days

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Are you ready to spend a cool weekend in Madrid eating, drinking, shopping, relaxing, and enjoying life's pleasures like an inspired local?

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Madrid

DAY NOTE: Head to the Mercado Fuencarral to update your wardrobe at the cool alternative mall and then check out the shops and people along Fuencarral Street. When you get hungry, feast on a selection of small sandwiches at Cervecería 100 Montaditos. At night hang out and have a beer at La Vía Láctea – the rockabilly bar that oozes personality and “Movida” history. But before you go home for the night, head over to Chocolatería San Ginés for a late night/early morning sugar high in the form of churros con chocolate.



La Via Lactea

Rockin' Movida bar



Chocolatería San Ginés

Hot Chocolate & Churros for Night-Owls

Day 2 - Madrid

DAY NOTE: Drink a café con leche while you read the Sunday paper at the classic Café Comercial. Spend the afternoon at Retiro Park strolling along the manicured paths, rowboating, or participating in a drum circle. Then relax and fortify yourself for the week with a glass of vermouth at Taberna Ángel Sierra.



Café Comercial

A classic bar with a modern lease of life



Parque del Retiro

Madrid's playground



Taberna Ángel Sierra

Vermouth à la 19th Century

Day 1 - Madrid

QUICK NOTE

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contact:
tel: 91-446-75-81
<http://www.lavialactea.net>

location:
Velarde 18
Madrid

1 La Via Lactea

DESCRIPTION: Still a favorite with young, fun ravers, this pioneer bar dates from the late '70s, when the famed post-Franco movida began. The place specializes in rock and hip-hop, and its walls are lined with posters of pop stars of the past 2 or more decades, including the Beatles, the Who, and the Rolling Stones. Open nightly from 9pm. © Frommer's



Roger Casas Alatríste

contact:
tel: +34 91 365 6546

location:
Pasadizo de San Ginés 5
Madrid 28013

hours:
Mo to Su from 06:00 PM to
07:00 AM

2 Chocolatería San Ginés

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:
Madrid's premier place to go for churros.

DESCRIPTION: Don't be surprised to find this café packed with people at 5a, everyone crowded around the marble-topped tables, dipping their fritters into steaming cups of thick hot chocolate and talking about their night out on the town. Night-owls of all shapes and sizes, ages, colors and classes converge here in the early hours of the morning. Tradition dictates that this is where your night ends. It has been serving coffee, hot chocolate, and Churros (fritters) for years and years. © wcities.com



wcities

Day 2 - Madrid

QUICK NOTE

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contact:
tel: 34 91 521 5655

location:
Glorieta de Bilbao 7
Madrid Madrid 28004

hours:
Su-Th 8a-1a, F-Sa 8a-2a

1 Café Comercial

DESCRIPTION: Dating from 1887, this old-fashioned cafe continues to serve coffee and hot chocolate on marble-topped tables in its spacious lounge surrounded by faded mirrors and an air of by-gone splendour. You enter through one of those traditional old revolving doors and are met by waiters who still wear formal white jackets signifying their profession. The owners recently decided to enter the 21st century and have installed 12 PCs so clients can surf the net. If you're hungry, choose from the wide assortment of sandwiches and limited range of more substantial dishes. It fills up at weekends when the party crowd meet up before heading out to the bars and clubs in the Bilbao and Malasaña neighborhoods. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:
tel: +34 91 5888790
<http://www.esmadrid.com/en/portal.do>

location:
Plaza de la Independencia, s/n
Madrid 28001

hours:
7a-11p M-Su, Summer: 24 hrs
M-Su

2 Parque del Retiro

DESCRIPTION: It's known as the "lungs of Madrid" and few cities can boast such a large park (118 hectares) in such a central location. There's a large boating lake and the park has three art galleries (Casa de Vacas, Palacio de Cristal and Palacio de Velázquez). On weekends and holidays, it fills with madrileños (citizens of Madrid) and performers of all sorts, including mime artists and jugglers, painters, singers, puppet masters and fortune-tellers. It was built as a royal park in the 17th century, and until 1868 it was the exclusive reserve of the aristocracy. © wcities.com



contact:
tel: +34 9153 1012 6

location:
Calle de Gravina 11
Madrid 28004

hours:
Su to Sa from 12:00 PM to
01:30 AM

3 Taberna Ángel Sierra

DESCRIPTION: Locals consider this bar to be a Chueca classic: its elaborately painted ceiling (think cherubs and wine gods), rows of antique liquor bottles, and giant bar barrels make it a kitschy yet inviting place to have Sunday vermouth—a popular drink that practically flows all day long from the 19th-century metal tap. It's an incredibly small space, so the majority of customers hang out in the doorway or right outside, drinks in hand. The menu of tapas includes such eccentricities as razor fish, deer stew, and canapés with cream cheese and anchovies. The list of specialized drinks—apart from vermouth—includes Guinness and pints of blond beer. - Michelle Campagna © wcities.com

Madrid Snapshot

Local Info

True to its reputation, Madrid knows how to throw a party. But more than that, the city possesses a lively vitality. From the raucous students who celebrate like it was still the 1980s to the quiet dignity of the city's matrons wrapped in their fur coats, the Spanish capital bubbles with a contagious, muted charm and is a study in contrasts.

With sophisticated tree-lined boulevards, world-class museums, and myriad cultural events, Madrid has earned its status as a European capital not to be missed. But even so, Madrid can still manage to conjure up a more provincial past in its squares, alleys, and popular traditions almost every neighborhood seems to have.

In this city each barrio delivers a different reward. Chueca is Madrid's mecca of trendy shops and party people. Lavapiés serves as the city's multicultural meeting point. Malasaña rumbles with a young rebellious streak. La Latina is the place for the tapas connoisseur while Salamanca is for the posh set. The Barrio de las Letras has a penchant for cool jazz and drinks.

Madrid's hot summer nights are improved by ubiquitous sidewalk cafes and bars, cold winter nights by the constant social calendar, and lazy Sundays by glasses of vermouth enjoyed amongst friends.

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History

In 1561, Madrid- with a population of 15,000- became the capital of Spain by decree of King Felipe II. He chose Madrid because of its central location, his aim being to unify the disparate regions of the peninsula and his vast empire.

Some historians claim that Madrid stands on the site of a Roman town, Mantua Carpetana. Although there's no proof to support this theory, archaeological remains do confirm that there has been continuous human settlement in this area for as long as any other part of Europe. The Museo Nacional Arqueológico displays archaeological artifacts left by prehistoric settlers.

The Moorish invasion of the peninsula is clearly documented. During the 9th century, the Moors built a military outpost

to guard against a Christian attack from the Guadarrama mountains to the north, on the rock where the Palacio Real(Royal Palace) now stands. They called this settlement Mayrit, and you can still see remains of the original defensive walls, below the Almudena Cathedral.

Christian forces unsuccessfully attacked Mayrit in 932, and again in 1047, in an attempt to regain the land they had lost. But it wasn't until 1086 that the Christian king, Alfonso VI, was able to capture Madrid(Mayrit) along with nearby Toledo. During the following decades, the city(which was still no more than a village) was constantly besieged. The Campo del Moro(Moor's Field), located just below the Royal Palace, was named after the Moorish siege encampment.

In the late 13th century, Madrid was an ordinary medieval village with less than 4000 inhabitants. Two churches still remain from that era, the San Nicolás de los Servitas and the San Pedro el Viejo, both located near the Plaza de la Villa.

The nobility began to gather in Madrid during the 14th century, and succeeding monarchs saw the growing settlement as a pleasant retreat from ongoing social unrest in other parts of the country. By the 15th century, Madrid had become a center of trade and finance, and areas like the Puerta del Sol and Plaza Mayor began to develop. The Catholic Monarchs(Isabel and Ferdinand) united the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon in 1479, and ruled over a period of relative political stability. During their reign, Christopher Columbus"discovered" the New World, and most of the Jewish population was expelled from Spain.

The French-born Felipe V was crowned king in 1700. By this time the capital had been in decline for many years and he set about regenerating it with the help of the Marquis de Vadillo and architects and engineers like Teodoro Ardeman and Pedro Ribera. They walled in the banks of the river Manzanares to make it look grander and built baroque masterpieces like the Puente de Toledo bridge, San Fernando Hospice(now the Museo Municipal), and Monte de Piedad.

Carlos III, who came to the throne in 1759, was known as the"mayor" because of all

the building work and improvements to the city he commissioned. Not only did he finish the construction of a new royal palace, Granja de San Ildefonso, he also renovated the area around the Prado by building the Plaza de Cibeles, Neptune's Fountain, and the Puerta de Alcalá.

Historians divide this century into two periods: decline and recovery. The French invasion, which installed Napoleon's brother on the Spanish throne, led to a period of decline in Madrid. King Joseph Bonaparte tore down a number of churches during his reign, leading to wider boulevards and generally broader streets as a result. When Fernando VII was returned to the throne, he restored the Church's property and began rebuilding what had been destroyed during the war.

During the reign of Queen Isabel II, the construction of the Isabel II Canal and the arrival of the railway expanded the city's transportation and communications network.

During Madrid's period of recovery, the city slowly regained its lost urban splendor. The prospering bourgeoisie started to build small residential palaces like the Palacio de Linares and the Palacio de Gaviria. The demand for housing grew, and new neighborhoods like Chamberí, Argüelles, and Salamanca were built outside the old town.

Madrid suffered the same feeling of defeat as the rest of the country when Spain lost its last remaining colonies(the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico) in 1898. Alfonso XIII was crowned king in 1902 and brought in a new period of parliamentary monarchy, which had to cope with the economic and political crisis resulting from the losses of 1898.

The only example of Modernist architecture, popular at this time in Europe and North America, is the Palacio de Longoria, which now acts as headquarters to the Sociedad General de Autores. The urban development program, Ciudad Lineal(Linear City), designed by engineer Arturo Soria, was the only progressive project of its kind to be carried out in a stagnant late-19th-century Madrid.

The most exciting architectural event of the early 20th century in Madrid was a gathering of international architects to

Madrid Snapshot continued

design the first stretch of the Gran Vía, from Calle Alcalá to San Luis.

The university campus (Ciudad Universitaria) was built during General Primo de Rivera's dictatorship (1923-1930) in a similar style to projects in the U.S. and other parts of Europe.

The Republican coalition won the elections of April 1931. Thousands of supporters celebrated the victory and the Declaration of the Second Republic in the Puerta del Sol.

Increasing social unrest and political instability led to a bloody civil war after a military uprising against the democratically elected Republican government. The civil war lasted from 1936-1939 and during this time the Republican-held city was under constant siege. The streets became war zones. The area between the Plaza de España, along Calle Princesa and Calle Rosales to the Parque del Oeste was most damaged by the constant bombings by the Nationalists. The park itself was the frontline. The Republicans cleverly managed to protect monuments like the Cibeles statue, the Puerta de Alcalá, and Neptune's fountain on Paseo del Prado under mounds of bricks and sandbags. The Republican barricades and cries of *No pasarán* (They shall not pass) could not stop the advance of the Nationalist forces.

A reconstruction program began after the civil war, and the Gran Vía was eventually completed. A massive influx of immigrants from other parts of Spain— even poorer than Madrid — rapidly increased the city's population.

During the 1960s, many new districts were built on the outskirts, spreading further and further out into the surrounding plains. The economy began to grow and speculative construction became common and damaging to districts like the Paseo de la Castellana where many historic palaces were demolished to make way for tall, modern apartment blocks.

There has been constant architectural change and renewal in Madrid since the end of the dictatorship in 1975. The Gran Vía is no longer the elegant avenue it once was. It's now a busy commercial street full of shops and cinemas. The Paseo de la Castellana, once home to the wealthy upper-middle classes, has been taken over by banks and embassies. The once

rundown and seedy Chueca district has been transformed by the gay community into a lively and stimulating place to live, work and have fun.

Since democracy returned to Spain, Madrid's fantastic metro system has expanded, numerous historic buildings have been restored, parks and public squares have been properly maintained, trees have been planted all over the city and new fountains built. Major construction projects like the Picasso Tower demonstrate what a modern place the city has become, eager to contribute to the European Union and benefit from the euro zone economy.

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Hotel Insights

Madrid offers visitors a full range of accommodation options, from the most luxurious five-star hotels to small affordable hostels.

Retiro & Paseo del Prado

The Westin Palace has always been popular with writers, performers, and politicians, from Ernest Hemingway, Ava Gardner, and Henry Kissinger to the Rolling Stones. It's worth going in, even if it's just for a coffee, to admire the magnificent décor. The Ritz, which opened in 1910, is widely considered to be the city's most elegant hotel. Both of these grand hotels are located conveniently close to Madrid's greatest attractions: the Prado Museum; the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum; the Reina Sofía Museum, the Botanical Gardens and Buen Retiro Park.

Plaza España & Conde Duque

There are also several comfortable hotels in the area around Gran Vía, Madrid's version of Broadway. The city's legendary street-life takes place here, in and around the many restaurants, bars, cinemas, theaters, and shops. The Tryp Washington is located here.

Chueca & Malasaña

The inexpensive but nice Hotel Mónaco is situated at Plaza de Chueca.

Salamanca

The NH Alcalá is close to Buen Retiro Park, which is a great place if you fancy jogging or strolling amongst the trees and

lakes. The shopping district around Calle Serrano also has several affordable hotels belonging to the NH chain: the NH Lagasca and NH Balboa, for example. The luxurious and modern Hotel Villa Magna caters to international celebrities and superstars as well. You'll find it on Paseo de la Castellana close to calle José Ortega y Gasset, home of Versace, Armani and other international fashion designer outlets. If you've got money to burn, book a room at the nearby Hotel Wellington, whose interior is as beautiful as its regal exterior.

Huertas & Santa Ana

If you elect to stay at the Reina Victoria during the bullfighting season and you might end up rubbing shoulders with a top bullfighter. The Victoria is beside the teatro Español in the plaza de Santa Ana, where you'll also find a wide selection of bars, restaurants and pubs. For a cheaper alternative in the same neck of the woods, check out the oldest hotel in the city, Hotel París. It opened in 1872 and continues to provide cheap, basic accommodation with a sense of history, close to the Puerta del Sol and the plaza de Santa Ana.

Cuzco & Infanta Mercedes

The Hotel Meliá Castilla in the north of the city, near the conference center on Paseo de la Castellana and Real Madrid's football stadium, Santiago Bernabéu, offers excellent conference facilities and accommodation for business executives.

Near the Airport

Hotel Novotel Campo de las Naciones offers business travelers comfortable accommodation near the airport and the IFEMA trade center. Golf courses are also nearby.

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Restaurants Insights

Good food and drink are central to life in Madrid, and there's no shortage of either anywhere in the city. The bars are full of people having tapas along with a drink. Two of the most popular tapas are *boquerones en vinagre* (marinated anchovies) and *empanada* (pastry filled with tuna and tomato). Or you might find people sharing *raciones* (larger versions of tapas) such as plates of *chorizo* (sausage), *jamón serrano* (cured ham), *tortilla de patata* (potato omelette), and *champiñones con ajos y*

Madrid Snapshot continued

jamón(mushrooms with garlic and ham). Bars usually have both tapas and raciones menus to choose from.

Tapas have an interesting history dating back to the 13th century when stagecoach drivers used to stop off in taverns to take a break and have a glass of wine after an exhausting journey transporting merchandise. They would get so drunk and become such a menace on the "highways" that the government introduced a law forcing them to eat something while they drank. They would usually be given a piece of bread and ham placed on top of their glass or jar of alcohol. These tapas (tops or lids) became a sensible and healthy custom that continues today.

Spaniards in general, and the people of Madrid in particular, are proud not to be bound by the rigid timetables that other nationalities follow. They're happy to sit down to a three-course lunch with wine and coffee at three o'clock in the afternoon before returning to work. Many foreigners see it as "wasting" two whole hours when they could be working, and they wonder how anyone could eat and drink so much and then continue to do any constructive work. Visitors are also often surprised, and a little alarmed, at the sight of everyone in the bar throwing used toothpicks, rolled-up napkins, cigarette ends, peanut shells and prawn heads onto the floor. No Spaniard will be offended at seeing a bar full of rubbish, but that custom, like hanging a leg of ham from the ceiling to slice jamón ibérico from, sometimes has a profound impact and not a very pleasant one- on the visitor.

Huertas & Santa Ana

The area around plaza de Santa Ana is a popular place to tappear (have tapas in one or more places). The Cervecería Alemana is located here and it's usually full of tourists. La Dolores is at the end of Calle Huertas just before it joins the Paseo del Prado and offers a great range of delicious tapas. There are similar bars on the same street that are just as good, such as Naturbier, a great micro-brewery not to be missed. Also in Huertas is Las Bravas, one of the best places in the world for patatas bravas (fried chunks of potatoes in a delicious, spicy, secret-recipe sauce), a specialty that no one outside Madrid seems to do properly.

La Latina & Lavapiés

The plaza de la Cebada has lots of good tapas bars, as well, such as El Almendro. Plaza de Alonso Martínez and Calle Conde Duque are both recommended for a tapas crawl. The best callos is served in Botillería Maxi on Calle Cava Alta and the best wines to accompany it are reds from Rioja and Ribera del Duero, although wines from the Madrid area are becoming increasingly popular. Other popular dishes include: caracoles (snails), tortilla de patata and sopa de ajo (garlic soup). Fish is brought fresh to the capital from the coast daily.

Plaza Mayor, Ópera & Sol

After you've toured a few bars and tried their tapas, it's time for lunch or dinner. You'll find the best local dishes in La Bola Taberna and Botín near the Plaza Mayor. The Madrid specialty is cocido madrileño, a stew with noodles, chickpeas, meat, and vegetables. It's perfect for a cold winter afternoon. Another Madrid favorite is scallos madrileños, tripe with chickpeas, chorizo, morcilla (blood sausage), and bacon fat in a slightly spicy sauce. You'll love it or hate it.

Castellana

The Castellana district is best in summertime when the tree-lined avenues are crowded with outdoor terrazas (sidewalk cafés) that remain busy until very late with trendy, well-dressed young professionals. Some of Madrid's oldest literary cafés like the Café Gijón are here, and you can still see tertulias (discussion groups) taking place today.

Salamanca

Quality foreign restaurants in Madrid can be somewhat of a hard thing to find. The Italian, Argentine, Mexican, and American restaurants are acceptable, but the Chinese are not very good (except for Tse Yang, which is excellent but prohibitively expensive for most), and there are few affordable "exotic" restaurants.

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Nightlife Insights

Madrid likes to party, but perhaps without quite the same level of enthusiasm that it partied in the 1980s during the movida madrileña (the period after 35 years of dictatorship when artistic, intellectual, and social life exploded with new-found

freedom). The weekend starts on Thursday evening when people head for their favorite bars. On weekends, crowds from the suburbs and surrounding towns join the party. Madrileños don't tend to go out on the town until after midnight and rarely arrive at clubs before 3a. However, even if your entertainment tastes are more sedate, you won't be disappointed (unless you were planning on having dinner at half past six!).

The best way to discover Madrid's nightlife is to explore the neighborhoods. There are people on the streets all weekend long. Moncloa tends to attract students; Malasaña sees many teenagers and the 18-30 crowd; Huertas is normally full of people in their 20s and 30s; Bilbao and Alonso Martínez cater to all age groups; Chueca is the most progressive area, home to the gay community; and the neighborhood around Salamanca has lots of quiet (and expensive) bars for the yuppies.

Discos & Clubs

Discos and clubs stay open very late, many of them past 6a. After a night out at Joy Madrid, for example, it's a Madrid tradition to go for early morning fritters and hot chocolate next door at Chocolatería San Ginés. Other clubs worth visiting are Palacio de Gaviria and Kapital. The Malasaña district is full of bars and clubs and tends to attract the younger folk. It's easy to party all night in any of the places around the plaza del 2 de Mayo. Black & White is one of the best-known gay discos in the city.

Galleries & Museums

The city is brimming with art galleries of every taste. For example, Galería Capa Esculturas specializes in sculpture, presenting the hottest new artists. Galería Estiarte shows promising new graphic artists, and for international flavor, Galería del Cisne features contemporary Catalan artists. The tony Salamanca district and Alonso Martínez also contain a number of galleries.

There are museums devoted to every subject from famous painters to famous motorcyclists. The three most important collections of art in Spain are all within walking distance of each other in what's known as Madrid's "Golden Triangle." The museo del Prado is the most famous and exhibits Spanish masters El Greco,

Madrid Snapshot continued

Velázquez, and Goya. The Thyssen Bornemizsa shows Van Dyck, Van Gogh, Dégas, Dalí, Carpaccio, and Kandinsky. The Centro de Arte Reina Sofía specializes in contemporary Spanish art, such as Picasso's Guernica and works by Miró and Dalí. You're sure to find something of interest among the many smaller, quirkier museums such as the Museo de los Bomberos (Firemen's Museum).

Cinemas

The cinemas are concentrated along the Gran Vía east of the Plaza de España. Movies tend to be dubbed into Spanish so if you want to see them in the original language, make sure it specifies V.O. (versión original) in the listing. **Dance Performances**

Lots of bars and clubs put on a traditional *tablao* where you can watch flamenco dancing in its different forms. Mainstream venues like the teatro de la Zarzuela and the Centro Cultural de la Villa (under the waterfall in the center of the plaza de Colón) host national and international companies performing ballet and contemporary dance. Although flamenco comes from the south of Spain, Madrid attracts many top acts. Try Casa Patas or Candela, or just wander through the gates of the Plaza Mayor until you hear something you like coming from within (but be prepared to pay hefty for it).

Live Music

As for music, jazz aficionados can choose from a number of clubs in the Huertas district including the local favorite, Populart. Or for Rock/Indie music you can go to larger venues like La Riviera, which hosts many major international superstars.

The lovely teatro de la Zarzuela and the Teatro Real are good places to hear classical music and opera.

Theater

There are dozens of "mainstream" theaters, often showing works by famous Spanish dramatists, many of whom have metro stops named after them (Quevedo, Tirso de Molina). The Nuevo Apolo, the Abadía and the Comedia are just a few. Or for way-out Spanish fringe try Sala Cuarta Pared or Sala El Canto de la Cabra. Be sure to check out Madrid's English-language

what's-on guide for a listing of English productions.

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Things to Do Insights

The Prado

The Prado is one of the most renowned museums in the world, featuring works by Spanish masters such as Velasquez, Goya and Picasso as well as other European artists like Raphael, Botticelli and Caravaggio. In the same area can be found the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, and Thyssen Bornemizsa, forming a triangle with the Prado known as the "Golden Triangle." You'll find another important city landmark that was built during the reign of Carlos III nearby in the middle of Plaza Cánovas del Castillo, Neptune's Fountain. When you get tired from all those museums, you can stop in to the nearby Gran Café de Gijón, the historic café where some of the world's best writers like Federico Garcia Lorca and Antonio Machado have come to wet their whistle. Another option for a little escape from the city is the close by Parque del Buen Retiro, which lies behind the wrought-iron fence. This park is a green and peaceful oasis in the middle of the busy city and it's a great place to take a break from sightseeing.

Palacio Real

The Palacio Real (Royal Palace) was once the home of Spanish monarchs for centuries and is located in Old Madrid, in the 16th and 17th century district known as Los Austrias. However, the Royal Family no longer lives in the 18th-century building as it is now used for official functions and as a museum. The Palacio Real stands just beyond the Plaza de Oriente, which stands opposite the Teatro Real, the Opera House. The Plaza de Oriente is lined with elegant cafés like the Café de Oriente, an ideal spot to sit and relax. Nearby, on Calle Segovia where the Papal Nuncio used to be, are a number of cafés and restaurants in former ecclesiastical buildings, such as Café del Nuncio and the Taberna de los 100 Vinos.

Plaza de España

The busy Plaza de España has become the new gateway to the city. From here, you can easily get to many popular and historic destinations like the Royal Palace and the Puerta del Sol as well as the

area known as Argüelles. In the Plaza de España, you'll find a monument to Cervantes with statues of Don Quijote and Sancho Panza, his most famous characters along with lots of people relaxing on the grass and the park benches. A few blocks away along the Calle Conde Duque, you will find the Cuartel de Conde Duque. It was built during the reign of Felipe V to house the Royal Guard. Today it's a cultural center that organizes excellent exhibitions of contemporary art, open-air concerts, theater performances, and educational workshops. Another nearby spot to visit is the Casa de Campo. On the perpendicular Paseo del Pintor Rosales, you'll soon come to the oldest building in Madrid, the Templo de Debod. The Egyptian government saved this temple from destruction during the building of the Aswan Dam, and presented it to Spain in 1960. The temple, dedicated to the goddess, Isis, is open to the public and worth visiting. Bars and restaurants abound in the areas surrounding the Plaza de España, such as Prada a Tope, which serves up the traditional, rustic cuisine of Spain's León region, or Dantxari, which serves up a taste of the Basque region.

Puerta del Sol

If you take the metro to Sol and leave by the Calle Carretas exit, you'll come out at the Puerta del Sol. Here, you'll see the famous clock tower, whose chimes officially announce the New Year on Spanish TV and radio. The statue of Carlos III is across from the clock tower, and the emblem of Madrid, the bear and arbutus tree (el oso y el madroño) is behind the statue. Within a couple of blocks and you'll come to Plaza de Santa Ana. The square is full of bars and restaurants and the area in general is crowded and lively at night. Many writers, painters, and intellectuals have lived and worked here and have been inspired by their surroundings. To your right is a small street called San Sebastián where you'll find a church by the same name, The Church of San Sebastián. The church archives hold the death certificates of Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Ruiz de Alarcón, among others. The most famous bar in the square is the Cervecería Alemana, which you'll find next to the Teatro Español. It's a quaint old-fashioned café where people sit, relax, read the newspaper, and have a bite to eat. A few blocks farther is where Calle Cervantes and Calle León meet. This is

Madrid Snapshot continued

where Cervantes lived during the last few years of his life. Unfortunately, his house was demolished in the 19th Century. He was buried in the grounds of the Trinitarias Convent on Calle Lope de Vega. Much of the area surrounding the Puerta del Sol has a very lively nightlife and sports interesting restaurants, cafés and bars such as Los Gabrieles. Each room of the bar is wonderfully decorated in colorful ceramic tiles depicting a different scene. The most famous room has a recreation of Velázquez's painting *Los borrachos* (The Drunkards).

Plaza Mayor

In the center of Madrid is the Plaza Mayor with its statue of Felipe III in the center. The square used to be used by merchants in the Middle Ages, and later for special occasions during the reign of Felipe II. In the Plaza Mayor you will find the Casa de la Panadería, the Plaza's first building. The façade was redecorated in 1980, and the building now houses various exhibitions. One of the most famous bars in the Plaza is the kitschy bullfighting themed Torre del Oro, where you can pick up a sherry and some tapas to fuel the rest of your day or evening. Don't forget to browse the Tiendas de la Plaza Mayor, shops selling all kinds of goods from bullfighting souvenirs to flamenco costumes. Just a few blocks from the Plaza Mayor in the Plaza de las Descalzas is the Museo del Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales (Descalzes Reales Museum). The museum of the Franciscan convent houses important paintings, sculptures and other beautiful works of art. Across from the convent is the Café de las Descalzas, an intimate and romantic restaurant featuring live music (mostly flamenco) several days a week. Heading back towards the Plaza Mayor from the Plaza de las Descalzas, you will encounter the Plaza de la Villa, which now houses the Town Hall amidst 15th-17th century mansions. Finally, after all this sightseeing, you can head down Calle Mayor to get to Casa Ciriaco, a tavern where you can chow down on hearty Spanish food and wines.

Barrio de Salamanca

The Barrio de Salamanca is one of Madrid's most affluent and exclusive neighborhoods. The barrio is packed full of art galleries such as Galería Alcolea and Galería Jorge Juan, along with some of the world's most exclusive shopping at stores such

as Chanel Boutique, Prada and Louis Vuitton to name just a few. Also abundant in the Barrio de Salamanca are museums. The famous Museo Arqueológico, with their reproduction of the Altamira caves in northern Spain and their prehistoric drawings. Here in Salamanca, you will also find the Museo de Escultura al Aire Libre, the outdoor sculpture garden featuring works by artists like Miró and Chillida. Also in the area is the Plaza de Colón, where you'll find two monuments to the discovery of America, one of them a statue of Columbus himself. Running from the Plaza de Colón to the Plaza de Castilla is the Paseo de la Castellana, one of Madrid's most famous streets, lined with grand mansions alongside national and foreign bank headquarters. When you start to work up an appetite, you can try any of the high quality restaurants in the Salamanca such as El Almirante for Navarran and Basque food or L'Entrecôte for French food. There is also the Mercado de la Paz, designed by Gustav Eiffel, where you can browse the market for fresh foods or dine at one of the two restaurants in the market.

Bus Tours Madrid VISION (+34 91 779 18 88/ <http://www.madridvision.es/en/index.php/>) Madrid Guided Tours (+34 917 056 748/ <http://www.madridguidedtours.com>)

Walking Tours Walks of Madrid (+34 917 912 879/ <http://www.walksofspain.com/>) Madrid Tourism Centre (+34 915 882 906/ http://www.esmadrid.com/descubremadrid_en/portal.do) Madrid Museum Tours (+34 680 450 231/ <http://www.madrid-museum-tours.org>)

Tapas Tours Walks of Madrid (+34 917 912 879/ <http://www.walksofspain.com/>) Madrid Guided Tours (+34 917 056 748/ <http://www.madridguidedtours.com>) Madrid Museum Tours (+34 680 450 231/ <http://www.madrid-museum-tours.org>)

Segway Tours Madsegs Tours S.L. (+34 659 824 499/ <http://www.madsegs.com/>)

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Travel Tips

Getting There

Air

Madrid Barajas Airport (MAD) (+34 91 305 6000/ <http://www2.aena.es/aeropuertos/>)

barajas/index.htm/) is located nine miles east of downtown, handles 25 million passengers a year. Major airlines serving the airport include:

Air Berlin (+45 30 41 47 75 10/ <http://www.airberlin.com/>) Air Europa (+1 888 238 7585/ <http://www.air-europa.com/>) Air France (+1 800 871 1366/ <http://www.airfrance.com/>) American Airline (+1 800 433 7300/ <http://www.aa.com/>) Blue Air (+40 40 21 208 86 86/ <http://www.blueair-web.com/>) BMI Baby (+0890 710 081/ <http://www.bmibaby.com/>) British Airways (+1 800 247 9297/ <http://www.british-airways.com/>) Continental (+1 800 525 0280/ <http://www.continental.com/>) Delta (+1 800 221 1212/ <http://www.delta.com/>) Easy Jet (+33(0)8 25 08 25 08/ <http://www.easyjet.com/>) Germanwings (+44 870 252 12 50/ <http://www1.germanwings.com/>) My Travel (+870 238 7710/ <http://www.mytravel.com/>) Smart Wings (+420 255 700 827/ <http://www.smartwings.net/>) TAP Portugal (+351 707 205 700/ <http://www.flytap.com/>) United (+1 800 241 6522/ <http://www.ual.com/>) US Airways (+1 800 428 4322/ <http://www.usairways.com/>) Virgin Express (+0821 2230 202/ <http://www.virgin-express.com/>)

From the Airport

Car Rental: Car rental desks can be found in each terminal at MAD. AresMobile also provides the option of renting a chauffeured vehicle. AresMobile (+34 917 477 570/ <http://www.aresmobile.com/>) Avis (+34 902 135 531/ <http://www.avis.com/>) Europcar (+34 902 405 020/ <http://www.europcar.com/>) Hertz (+34 902 402 405/ <http://www.hertz.com/>) National (+34 902 100 101/ <http://www.nationalcar.com/>)

Taxi: Taxis are easy to locate outside the terminals. Depending on traffic, downtown rides average between 20-30 minutes. Only board taxis that operate via meter, for the others are notorious for overcharging. A usual fare into town averages around EUR17-EUR25.

Shuttles: AeroCITY (+34 91 747 7570/ <http://www.aerocity.com/>) operates around the clock. Each holds up to seven passengers and, depending on location, costs between EUR17-EUR38. Reservations are encouraged but not imperative.

Bus Service: Madrid buses are frequent and an efficient way to the downtown area.

Madrid Snapshot continued

Several different bus lines connect the various terminals with points around the city. From Terminal 4, line 204 provides service to the Avenida de América in the city center. Also from Terminal 4, line 201 transports passengers to the Barajas Metro station. From Terminals 1, 2 and 3, line 200 travels to Avenida de América and the city center. The busses run from around 6a until 2a. Fares can run anywhere from EUR1 to EUR3 for a single fare.

Rail: Plenty of ground transportation options abound with the Metro's Line 8 being the best. Opened in 2002, this line of the Metro is fast, efficient, and comfortable. Its boarding station can be found in Terminal 2 and rides only last 12 minutes. Trains run from 6a until 1:45a, daily. Passengers must change trains twice to reach downtown. The Metro is not yet connected to Terminal 4, so passengers must take the bus line 201 to Terminal 2 in order to take the Metro.

Highway

There are seven major Autovías, or highways, running in and out of Madrid. All these highways are named for major destinations on the route as well as having numbers. The A-1 or the Burgos Highway(also known as the Autovía del Norte), connects Madrid with Burgos and Santander to the north of Madrid, as well as cities in the Basque region, France and the ferries to the United Kingdom. The A-2, or Barcelona Highway, runs directly(as its name implies), to Barcelona to the northeast and Portbou in France. The A-3/Valencia Highway runs southeast to Valencia through Cuenca and Albacete. From Valencia it runs south to Alicante. The A-4/ Andalucía Highway, runs to numerous cities in the south of Spain, including Seville, Granada, Málaga, Cádiz and the ferries to Morocco. The A-5/Extremadura Highway runs east to the Extremadura region of Spain, passing through the cities of Trujillo, Cáceres, Mérida, and on to Lisbon and Southern Portugal. The A-5 can also be used as a route to the western part of Andalucía. The A-6/A Coruña Highway runs northwest to nearby El Escorial, Ávila, Salamanca, Segovia, Zamora, León, Galicia, and on to Northern Portugal. Finally, the A-42/Toledo Highway runs south to Toledo. Within Madrid there are three major ring roads, the inner ring is M-30, and two outer rings, the M-40, which services many suburbs, and the M-50, which runs much more rural areas.

Getting Around

Car

Madrid, like any sprawling metropolis, has its fair share of traffic congestion. Driving here, if not familiar with the city by car, can be a rather daunting experience. Visiting drivers must remain vigilant as locals tend to be somewhat reckless in their driving, and taxi and bus lanes must be respected. Additionally, parking can be an extreme hassle, and there are several rules that visiting drivers should be aware of when attempting to park in Madrid. In between certain hours, "green areas" are parking reserved only for residents with the proper permit, while others will have to pay. "Blue areas" are visitor parking with a 2 hour limit, and payment is required here as well. An easy solution is to park only in designated "parking areas" or garages to avoid ticketing or towing. As Madrid has a very extensive and efficient public transportation system, visitors who find this explanation intimidating may be better off not renting a car or driving here unless necessary.

Taxi

Taxis are easy to hail from downtown streets as long as the weather remains clear. Madrid's cab drivers have an odd reputation for being fair weather drivers. As soon as it begins to rain they apparently lose faith in their vehicle's ability to repel water and disappear. Only use metered cabs and keep in mind that they all add strange surcharges for driving on Sundays and holidays and out to the bullring. Tele-Taxi(+34 91 371 2131) and Radio Taxi Gremial(+34 91 447 5180) are two of Madrid's more prominent cab companies.

Subway

The Metro(<http://www.metromadrid.es/>) subway system represents the fastest means for scooting about the city. Twelve lines and a branch line, each designated by color and number, with 190 stations cover all of Madrid, including the airport. Keep an alert eye on personal items, for the subway stations are pickpocket magnets. A one-way ticket averages around EUR1. Most visitors opt for the cheaper 10-Trip ticket for EUR6.70. Hours: 6a-1:30a.

Bus

Estación Sur de Autobuses(+34 91 468 4200) serves as Madrid's main bus station. The Alsa-Entacar bus company(+34 90 242 242/ <http://www.alsa.es/>) buzzes into Madrid from every direction and is part of Eurolines/National Express, which services all of Europe. Madrid's extensive public transportation system makes it possible to visit without the need of a car. Its red city buses(+34 91 406 8810/<http://www.ctm-madrid.es/>) service every district in and around Madrid. More than 1,900 buses cover 185 routes. Night buses are also available.

Train

Renfe(+34 93 490 1122/<http://www.renfe.es/>), Spain's largest train line, chugs into Madrid on a daily basis. Its north station, Chamartin(+34 91 315 9976) services all points north of the city including France to the east and Portugal to the west. Atocha(+34 91 328 9020), the south station, caters to the towns and cities in southern and eastern Spain, including Seville and Valencia.

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Fun Facts

Little known fact: Madrid's first permanent settlers were the Moors, who called the town Magrit. Popular fact: Madrid is the third-most populous city in Europe, the most visited city in Spain, and the fourth most visited city in Europe. Fun fact: Madrid's inhabitants are known as cats(gatos)—a nickname owed to a Christian soldier who stealthily climbed the Moorish wall and replaced the flag. Fast fact: Kilometer Zero in Madrid's Puerta del Sol is the point from which all Spain's highways are measured. It's also a popular local meeting spot. Ironic fact: The bad blood between two of Spain's literary greats, Miguel de Cervantes and Lope de Vega, was well known. Yet Lope de Vega's former house, converted into a museum, is located on what is now known as Cervantes Street. And Cervantes was buried at the Convent of the Barefoot Trinitarians, which is located on what is now Lope de Vega Street. Useful fact: It occasionally snows in Madrid in the winter. Interesting fact: Said to have died for Spanish liberty, Manuela Malasaña was a young seamstress killed by French troops during the May 2 Uprising in 1808. The neighborhood where the events took place

Madrid Snapshot continued

was renamed in her honor: Malasaña. Weird fact: Madrid's beautiful Plaza Mayor (Main Square) was once used for bullfights, public executions and Inquisition trials. Unusual fact: The city of Madrid is sometimes

referred to as Los Madriles. Historical fact: In 1561 Felipe II made Madrid the base for his court, creating the status as Spain's capital city that Madrid has enjoyed ever since. Random fact: The tallest building in Madrid and Spain is the Caja Madrid Tower

with a height of 250 meters. Contemporary fact: More than 15% of Madrid's residents are foreign-born.

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