

Hostelworld Guide for Madrid



Located right in the centre of Spain, Madrid is a city that will suit those who like to rise early and see as much as they can in a day as well as those more accustomed to the night owl lifestyle. Art lovers won't know where to go with three of Europe's best art galleries located within five minutes walk of each other, while the Spanish capital also has one of the world's most ornate palaces. After dark, once businesses close and the working Madrileños begin their trek home, another breed of Madrileños begin their trek into the city to keep Madrid's numerous tapas restaurants, bars and clubs full until the early hours of the morning.

In this Guide...

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Top Attractions
Budget Tips
Where to Shop



The Essentials

Getting There

By plane: Madrid's Bajas International Airport is 14km from the city centre. The easiest way to get to the city is via metro from Terminal T2 or the newer Terminal T4 costing €2. Another great option is the Exprés Aeropuerto (Airport Express), a 24-hour service that terminates at Atocha Railway Station. A single bus ticket costs €5.

By train: Madrid has two stations - Atocha Station and Chamartín Station. Atocha is where trains travelling from Portugal and Spain terminate long distance ones end up in Chamartín.

By bus: Estación Sur de Autobuses on Calle Méndez Alvaro is Madrid's main bus hub.

Getting Around

On foot: Madrid is quite big. Many sites are within walking distance of each other but you'll definitely need to hop on a metro or bus at some stage.

By metro: Madrid's metro system is efficient and easy to use. There are 10 lines. All are numbered and have a different colour. You'll never have to wait more than 4 minutes for one.

By bus: There are approximately 170 bus lines in operation. You probably won't need to use them but the night buses are handy.

By taxi: Madrid's taxis are easily hailed down and not too expensive.

Useful phrases

Hello: Hola
Goodbye: Adios
Please: Por favor
Thank you: Gracias
You're welcome: De nada
Yes: Si
No: No
Of course: De acuerdo
Excuse me: Perdona
How are you?: Como estas?
Open: Abierto
Closed: Cerrado
What is your name?: Cual es tu nombre?
My name is...: Mi nombre es...
How much?: Cuanto Cuesta?
May I have the bill?: Me puede traer la cuenta?

Climate

Rain isn't something which graces the streets of Madrid very often. This is due to its location in the centre of the country. This combined with its elevation means that it has a very extreme climate, with temperatures climbing to 32°C regularly (and higher) during the summer months. In autumn the Spanish capital is still very mild while temperatures drop to a low of approximately 10°C in January. Spring, along with autumn, is regarded as the best season to visit when temperatures hover between 15° and 25°.

Average Monthly Stats

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
C	6	7	9	12	16	21	24	24	21	14	9	7
MM	46	43	38	46	41	23	10	10	30	46	64	48
☀	5	6	6	8	9	11	12	11	9	6	5	5

C: Average Temp Centigrade
MM: Average Rainfall
☀: Average Hrs Sunshine

Useful Information

Language: Spanish
Currency: Euro
Electricity: 220 Volts AC/50Hz. 2-pin plug.
Area Code: +34 (ESP) and 91 (Madrid)
Emergency Code: Ambulance 061, Fire 080, Police 091
Time Zone: Central European Time (GMT+1)
Central Post Office: Plaza de Cibeles
Main Tourist Office: Calle del Duque de Medinaceli, 2

Embassies

USA: +34 91 587 22 00
UK: +34 91 700 82 00
Canada: +34 91 423 32 50
Australia: +34 91 353 66 00
South Africa: +34 91 436 37 80
Ireland: +34 91 436 40 93
Germany: +34 91 557 90 00
Italy: +34 91 423 33 00
New Zealand: +34 91 533 02 26
France: +34 91 423 89 00

Cheap Eats

Canas Y Tapas, c/Atocha, 42 Even though Canas Y Tapas is a large chain of tapas bars, they each manage to maintain some sense of character and you'll find both tourists and locals picking from a wide range of good, reasonable tapas. Hardly any of the generous portions on the newspaper-style menu are over €4. *Open daily from 9am-11pm.*

Fresco, C/ Caballero de Gracia, 8 Specialising in 'all-you-can-eat' buffets, Fresco is great value for money. For €7.80 (Mon-Fri) you can choose from an extensive range of salads, while if you're looking for something a bit more substantial you can stuff yourself on pizza and pasta to your heart's content. *Open daily from 12.30pm-1am; buffet costs €9.20 after 8pm and at weekends.*

Casa Alberto, c/Huertas, 18 Upon setting foot in this well-known tapas bar you won't know where to look - at the glistening bottles racked up behind the counter, at the pictures hanging proudly on the wall or at the small, but full menus. Most tapas aren't over €4. *Open Tues-Sun 12pm-5pm, 8pm-1.30am.*

Just to clarify...what is tapas?



Tapas are a selection of small, savoury dishes that are either eaten on their own as a snack or collectively as a meal. So now you know. What are some of these tapas dishes? Well you can have calamari (deep fried squid), Spanish ham, sun-dried tomatoes, sardines, croquettes, potatoes, meatballs...the list goes on. Madrid is laced with tapas bars and prices start at €2.50.

Madrid Madriz, c/Fuencarral 85 If you're sick of picking at tapas and relish the thoughts of something more conventional, Madrid Madriz is where to go. Right outside Tribunal metro stop, here you have a vast selection of hot/cold sandwiches from €3, pizzas and burgers from €4, and full meals from €5 to choose from. *Open 8.30am-1am Mon-Thurs/Sun & 9am-1.30am Fri & Sat.*

After Dark

MADride Pub Crawl If you want to pack as much in at night as you have during the day, a pub crawl is your answer. Madrid's most popular bar crawl takes place twice a week and takes you to Madrid's most popular bars. What makes it better is that you get a free shot in every bar! *MADride Pub Crawl leaves from 'The Bear' statue in Puerta del Sol every Wednesday and Sunday at 11pm.*

Plaza de Santa Ana Madrid is a city that doesn't tend to sleep that much. There are squares and streets all around this bustling city that are buzzing right into the early hours and this is one of those squares. **Cervceria Alemana** and **Bar Mauna Loa** always attract a sizeable crowd while round the corner on **Calle de las Huertas** are many more bars looking to inebriate you even further.

Gay / Lesbian Madrid

Unlike Barcelona, Madrid's gay scene is concentrated around one area - Chueca, and in particular, **Plaza Chueca**. **Café Acuarela** (c/Gravina, 10) is one of Chueca's more subdued bars. Beside it is **Truco**, popular among the Spanish capital's lesbian fraternity. **Calle de Pelayo** just round the corner from the square also has many gay venues, the most popular being **Bears Bar**, **Eagle Madrid** and the aptly named **New Leather**.

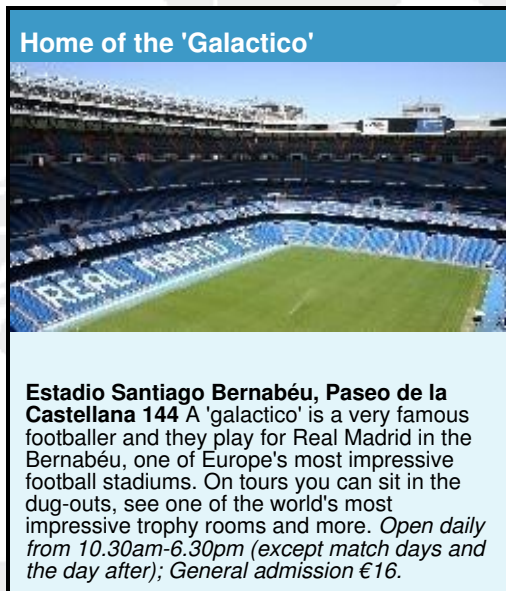
La Comedia, c/Principe 16 As plush as this bar just off Plaza Santa Ana may seem, it is surprisingly forthcoming to easy going backpackers who make the trek to the Spanish capital every weekend. Its dark décor creates a subdued ambiance, but this changes as the night gets older when livelier tunes cause each member of the clientele to get down. *Open nightly from 5pm-4am.*

Around Alonso Martinez metro station The streets around this metro stop are where you will find a large batch of bars and clubs. Both **Calle de Pelayo** and **Calle de Campoamor** are swarming with young, bar hopping Madrileños.

Kapital, c/Atocha, 125 With 7 floors to get lost in, Kapital is one of Madrid's biggest clubs. The first, as you walk in, is where some of the world's biggest DJs let loose on the decks. The karaoke floor is where some of Madrid's alcohol-fuelled party animals let loose on the mic, while other floors keep hip-hoppers and salsa dancers happy. *Open Thurs-Sun midnight-6am.*

Don't Miss

Museo Nacional del Prado, Paseo del Prado This huge, imposing museum houses not only Madrid's, but Spain's most important art collection. As well as canvases by many of the country's most celebrated painters there are also masterpieces by some of the world's best-loved artists like Rembrandt and Titian. *Open Mon - Sat: 10am - 8pm. Sundays and holidays: 10am - 7pm; General admission €12.*



Estadio Santiago Bernabéu, Paseo de la Castellana 144 A 'galactico' is a very famous footballer and they play for Real Madrid in the Bernabéu, one of Europe's most impressive football stadiums. On tours you can sit in the dug-outs, see one of the world's most impressive trophy rooms and more. *Open daily from 10.30am-6.30pm (except match days and the day after); General admission €16.*

Palacio Real, Plaza de Oriente, c/Bailén 2-6 Taking 26 years to complete, Madrid's grand palace will take your breath away. It has approximately 2,800 rooms, 50 of which are open to the public. *Opening hours: Mon - Sat 9.30am - 5pm, Sun & public holidays 9am - 2pm; general admission €8, free on Wednesday.*

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, c/Santa Isabel 52 Madrid's modern art museum is housed in a former hospital and has the best collection of 20th century Spanish art in Spain. It has two floors - two with temporary exhibitions and two with permanent ones. *Open Mon-Sat 10am-9pm, Sun 10am-2.30pm (closed Tues); admission €6.*

Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Paseo del Prado, 8 The third art gallery in Madrid's 'Big 3', this houses arguably the most varied collection of all. Here you will find some astounding examples of Renaissance art, other of late/post impressionist art while the ground floor houses some beautiful examples of pop art. *Open Tues-Sun 10am-7pm; admission €9.*

Mark Your Calendar

January - Dia de los Reyes Magos Otherwise known as 'Three Kings Day', on January 6th a huge parade marches through the streets of the Spanish capital to the delight of children and adults alike.

February/March - Carnival Madrid goes 'loco' for its annual Carnival. Highlights include fancy dress parades and street parties.

May - Fiesta Dos de Mayo Held in Plaza Dos de Mayo in Madrid's Malasana district on May 2nd, this annual holiday commemorates the anniversary of its uprising against the Napoleonic forces. Live music in the square entertains all who attend.

May - Fiesta de San Isidro This annual festival is Madrid's largest. Celebrating the city's patron saint, San Isidro, live music can be heard all over the city. Plaza Mayor is always buzzing with activity.

June/July - Madrid Pride Spain's largest Pride celebrations last approximately a week. The main event throughout the celebrations is an outlandish parade and the festival finishes with a huge party.

July to September - Veranos de la Villa Lasting over two months, 'Summer in the City' is one of the largest arts festivals staged in the city. Local and international artistes put on all types of performances from dance to theatre.

August - Fiesta de San Lorenzo Held at the El Escorial Palace outside Madrid on August 10th, this is a huge celebration of El Escorial's patron saint with parades and a huge fair.

October - Tennis Masters Series: Madrid The world's top tennis players jet into Madrid for this tennis tournament in Madrid's Rocódromo arena.

October/November - Festival de Jazz de Madrid The Spanish capital's annual jazz festival draws not only Spain's biggest names but some of the world's also. Performances are staged all over the city.

November - Fiesta de la Virgen One of Madrid's more religious festivals, on November 9th thousands of Madrileños gather in Plaza Mayor for Mass to celebrate the city's female patron saint.

December - New Year's Eve Thousands flock to Puerta del Sol to ring in the New Year at midnight every year. What makes the celebrations here a bit different is that it is tradition to eat a grape at the stroke of midnight for good luck.

Neighbourhood Watch

La Latina The origins of the city of Madrid are based in this charming neighbourhood. It is home to lots of winding streets, along which you will find some of the best tapas bars in the city, particularly around Cava Baja and Cava Alta. This neighbourhood is transformed on a Sunday morning as it hosts the famous El Rastro flea market.

The busiest part of town



Gran Vía Even though it's just one avenue, this 'Great Way' is one of the city's busiest neighbourhoods. It's Madrid's main shopping district with many high-street and brand label stores lining its paths, along with Calle de Fuencarral. Around Gran Vía you will also find many cinemas, plazas, cafes and breath taking architecture.

Chueca This lively neighbourhood is known as the gay district of Madrid and is home to many street cafes and boutique shops. It also hosts some of the best nightlife in the city, particularly for the LGBT community, but worth checking out whatever your sexual orientation.

Alonso Martínez Close to many cultural areas like the Prado Museum and not too far from the stunning Parque del Buen Retiro, the Alonso Martínez area is one of Madrid's popular neighbourhoods. It is home to the beautiful Plaza de Colon which honours Christopher Columbus and also the National Library.

Malasaña Renowned for its nightlife as much as its creativity, the Malasaña district of Madrid is centred around Plaza del Dos de Mayo and is lined with bars and clubs. This vibrant district has a great atmosphere at night many locals take part in drinking and socialising on the streets, more commonly known as Botellones.

Retail Therapy

El Corte Ingles, c/Abada, 5 El Corte Ingles have stores all over Spain. This particular branch on c/Abada in Madrid's Sol district specialises in men and women's discounted fashions. Others around the city which may be of interest include the branch at c/Preciados 1 (music) and another at number 9 on the same street (sports). *Open from 10am-10pm.*

Calle de Fuencarral If every time you reach for something to wear out at night, you pull out something which doesn't exactly get your heart racing, you need to make your way down to this street off Gran Vía. Both sides are lined with clothes stores dealing in the latest fashions and footwear. All budgets and tastes are catered for here.

Looking to brighten up your Sunday?



El Rastro, Plaza de Cascorro Regardless of whether you burn the candle at both ends on Saturday night or not, Sunday morning can seem like a glum part of the week. This market may brighten it up somewhat. Here you can find anything - shirts, jeans, handbags, vests, jewellery, t-shirts, shoes...you name it. *Open every Sunday from 9am-1pm.*

Calle de Barbieri If the thoughts of peeling yourself from your bed before midday on a Sunday are less than appealing you may wish to check out this street in Madrid's Chueca district. Every night between 8pm and midnight street traders sell various types of jewellery (bracelets, necklaces etc) while other things such as sketches can be picked up too.

Sol district The true heart of Madrid's city centre is known as Sol. It's main artery is Gran Vía. This is where you will find stores such as H + M and other well known brands. Once you reach Plaza de Callao, the two pedestrianised streets from here, Calle del Carmen and Calle de Preciados are also peppered with shops.

Budget Tips

Visit two of Madrid's top museums for free If you are visiting Madrid at the weekend and you plan on visiting both the Reina Sofia and Prado art galleries, good news - the Reina Sofia gallery is free on Monday to Friday 7pm - 9pm, Saturday from 2.30pm to 9pm and on Sunday from 10am to 7pm. And the Prado is free Monday to Saturday 6pm - 8pm, and Sundays and holidays 5pm - 7pm also. Result!

Save money when using the metro At €1.50 per single journey, Madrid's metro system isn't exactly expensive. But there are still savings to be made. A 10-journey ticket costs just €12 so invest in one if you plan on using the metro a lot.

Visit Madrid's churches Most of Madrid's churches and cathedrals are free to visit. The best known is **Catedral de Nuestra Señora de la Almudena**, the city's cathedral. Others that are worth locating include the baroque **Basilica de San Miguel**, **Iglesia de San Jerónimo** with its stunning façade and **Iglesia de San Ginés** which, dating back to the 14th century, is one of the city's oldest.


A breath of fresh air





The Spanish capital is full of some immaculately kept parks and gardens, most of which are free to visit. They are the perfect place to retreat to when you want to break away from the city's hustle and bustle. One of the most popular is **Campo del Moro** a large garden with long, winding, tree-lined paths to stroll around. Two others which draw crowds are **Parque del Buen Retiro** and **Real Jardín Botánico** (adm. €2), both of which are beside Museo del Prado.


Plaza de la Cibeles/Gran Vía/Plaza Mayor If you're looking for a way to spend an afternoon without spending any euro, take a few hours to visit these three landmarks. Start at Plaza de la Cibeles. You could take a roll of film here on its own. From there take a leisurely stroll down Gran Vía, the city's main artery, then finish off with some people watching in Plaza Mayor.


A Day in Madrid...


 Begin the day in the grand Plaza Mayor right in the centre of the Spanish capital. Originally a market place, today it is one of the best places to people watch in the city.

 After marvelling at Plaza Mayor's uniform architecture, stroll down c/Atocha, stopping in Peter Pan (#45) for breakfast.


 Madrid has three main art galleries. Lovers of classic art should visit Museo del Prado. Those who prefer modern art head for the Reina Sofia or Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza.


 Visit one of Europe's most glorious fountains at Plaza de la Cibeles. From here grab some lunch along Gran Vía.


 Take your time to explore Gran Vía, arguably Madrid's best known street. It never stops buzzing. If you need some new clothes, check out the shops on Calle Fuencarral.

 Get the metro from Gran Vía to Opera beside Palacio Real. Explore its rooms. If you don't fancy checking out the palace, stroll through Campo del Moro.



 Madrid is full tapas bars. Stop in one and tank up on tapas! Casa Alberto is one of Madrid's most popular.

 Things don't get going in Madrid until midnight so, before going loco, chill out around Plaza de Santa Ana before going somewhere more lively.

 Madrid's nightlife is legendary. There are loads of bars/clubs around Plaza de Santa Ana while near Alonso Martinez metro station has loads of bars too.