

# Madrid's Best Ice Cream Shops!

Summer, sun, heat, walks... When I think of all these things, only one thing comes to mind—ice cream! Madrileños love ice cream. In the same way that in winter we never say no to a good hot chocolate with churros, during the summer, it's all about ice cream. *Granizados* and *horchata* are also big winners.

Virtually all cafes and bakeries in Madrid offer a wide range of ice cream flavors and other refreshing treats. But finding the highest quality homemade ice cream isn't so easy. That's why we've brought you this list of our favorite ice cream shops, which are conveniently located in different neighborhoods across the city so you'll have easy access whenever you get a craving!

## Here a few key words when ordering ice cream in Spanish:

Ice cream: *helado*

Flavor: *sabor*

Scoop: *bola*

Cone: *cucurucho*

Cup: *tarrina*

## Now, here's the inside scoop on our favorite ice cream shops in Madrid:

### 1. Mistura



Owned by young entrepreneurs who were inspired by a different way of making ice cream in India, Mistura serves up handcrafted ice cream in the heart of Madrid with a smile, using local and healthy ingredients. The first time I went there I was smitten. The guys who work there are really nice and they personalize your ice cream. Right in front of you, they mix the different flavors and toppings of your choice on a cold slab of granite (apparently to enhance its texture). I ordered *maracuyá*. Not to mention they've expanded their coffee and breakfast list.

[Web](#)

**Address:** c/ Augusto Figueroa, 5

**Metro:** Chueca

## 2. Sani Saporì



Run by very friendly and chatty Italians, [Sani Saporì](#) is by far one of our favorite shops in the city for its high quality ice cream (would you expect anything less from Italians?) and host neighborhood, Lavapiés! Situated on Calle Lavapiés 31, right in front of a million Indian food restaurants, you'll find this little cozy shop a godsend after a big dinner or during a nighttime summer stroll. Last time I went, we had to have two rounds each... They didn't have vanilla which was odd to me, but they made up for it with their mix of classic and innovative flavors. My favorite was the chocolate (simple I know, but truly divine). They also have a few tables set up outside which makes it a perfect experience all around.

[Web](#) & [Facebook](#)

Price range: €2.50-3.50, check out the full price list [here](#)

Address: Calle Lavapiés 31

Metro: Lavapiés or Tirso de Molina

### 3. Los Alpes



[photograph: 11870.com](http://photograph: 11870.com)

Founded in 1950 by Pedro Marchi and Marcelina Ladero, Los Alpes is a real institution in Madrid. Located in the Moncloa area, the variety of flavors is infinite, from the most traditional to the most innovative. As a Madrileña I have to say, it makes me very happy that places like Los Alpes are still here after all these years.

#### [Web](#)

**Price Range:** €1.50 – €7.80 (giant)

**Address:** Calle del Arcipreste de Hita, 6

**Metro:** Moncloa or Arguelles

### 4. Labonata







Without a doubt, if we talk about Chueca we're talking about good restaurants, shops, cafés and, of course, ice cream is no exception. Located in Plaza de Chueca, this is a wonderful place for anyone who enjoys trying out new flavors, as this shop offers all the traditional kinds as well as more innovative options such as *violet*, *marzipan* and *watermelon*. I chose *lemon pie*... and it was pure pleasure.

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

**Price Range:** €2.90 – €4.50

**Address:** Plaza de Chueca, 8

**Metro:** Chueca

## 5. Kalúa Helado Artesanal





We couldn't leave [Kalúa](#) out of this list. This ice cream shop has been around for ages, or as they say in Spanish, "*ide toda la vida!*" Located on Calle Fuencarral, in between metros Bilbao and Quevedo, Kalúa has been a staple among locals for many years and hasn't lost its popularity despite the appearance of more stylish ice cream parlours like Mistura. The key to this place's success is its **100% handcrafted ice creams**, affordable prices and delicious flavors, like **dulce de leche**, **kinder bueno** and **red velvet**. Kalúa is definitely a must when it comes to summertime treats in Madrid.

[Web](#)

**Address:** Calle Fuencarral, 131

**Metros:** Bilbao & Quevedo

## 6. Palazzo





Here's another institution: Palazzo, an ice cream chain that has a place in every Madrileño's childhood. If you don't believe me, try this: ask any Madrileño about the best ice cream in the centre and their answer will probably be the same "Palazzo". Few places have endured the passing of time as well as Palazzo. Its range of flavors is classic: chocolate, lemon, pistachio, mint...etc. All of them are famous for being entirely artisanal. My favorite flavors are the pistachio and *Turron* (a very traditional Spanish sweet eaten at Christmas time, similar to nougat).

### [Facebook](#)

**Address:** *among their various locations, we have: Plaza de la Puerta del Sol, 11 and Calle Goya, 49*

**Metro:** *Sol or Goya*

## **7. Giuseppe Ricci**



Located in Huertas, also known as Barrio de las Letras, this is a wonderful place if you're looking for great handcrafted ice cream. They have a wide variety of flavours.

[Web](#)

**Price range:** €2.20 – €3.20

**Address:** Calle de Las Huertas, 9, 28012 Madrid

**Metro:** Sol, Sevilla or Tirso de Molina

**After posting this article, many people have recommended Heladerías La Romana on Paseo de la Habana, 27 (metros: Cuzco, Colombia, Pío XII)**

Feel free to recommend us any other places – we'll add them to the list!

Enjoy!!

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## Madrid's 10 Most Beautiful Surrounding Towns

One of the best things about living in Madrid is that you can easily escape the city center and take a day-trip or weekend getaway to one of the beautiful nearby towns.

These towns have some of the world's oldest universities, cathedrals, monasteries and historic monuments. You'll also find [natural swimming pools](#), mountains, hiking trails and other [adventure activities](#). And make sure to try special dishes like Segovia's *cochinillo*, suckling pig, or Ávila's sugary egg yolks, known as *yemas*.

Here's a list of the most popular nearby towns, plus a few things you should know about each one. Click on each town name below or our category link "[How to get to](#)" for a more in-depth post on each one, and all the different ways to get there.

### Madrid's surrounding towns

1. [Alcalá de Henares](#): free tapas and [Cervantes' home](#)
2. [Aranjuez](#): royal gardens and palace
3. [Avila](#): old surrounding wall from medieval times, cathedral of Avila



4. [Buitrago de Lozoya](#): castle and large reservoir
5. [Cercedilla](#): mountains that are great for hiking, biking, swimming (natural pool) and other adventure activities
6. [Cuenca](#): cathedral of Cuenca, hanging houses and lamb
7. [El Escorial](#): monastery, Valle de los Caídos (20th-century war memorial)
8. [Rascafría](#): nature, restaurant El Pautar, monastery of El Pautar, hiking trails, natural pool, and a waterfall
9. [Segovia](#): Roman aqueduct, cochinitillo (suckling pig), The Jewish Quarter, Alcázar of Segovia (castle) and a nearby town called La Granja
10. [Toledo](#): beautiful old streets and architecture, museums, and the synagogue of El Transito. Where three cultures lived in harmony for centuries (Jewish, Christian and Muslim).



# How to get to Madrid's airport

**Barajas International Airport** has been recently renamed after Spain's first democratically-elected president, **Adolfo Suárez**. The airport is absolutely enormous, covering two different metro stops. Its 4 terminals are spacious and spread out, which is why they're connected by train and bus services inside the airport itself. Luckily, Madrid's airport isn't located far from the city center and there are plenty of ways to get there.

Here are the 6 main ways to get to Madrid's Barajas (Adolfo Suárez) Airport:

## 1. Metro: Línea 8

### Línea 8 - Metro de Madrid 2014

© [www.mapametromadrid.net](http://www.mapametromadrid.net)



The airport has two metro stops: the first stop is dedicated to Terminals 1, 2 and 3 (T1, T2 and T3) and the second stop is dedicated solely to Terminal 4 (T4). Take **line 8** (the pink line) from **Nuevos Ministerios** and you will be there in about **15 minutes**, depending on if you get off at the first or second

stop (just a few minutes difference). To enter or leave Barajas airport by metro, you will have to buy a single ride ticket (around 1,50€ depending on destination) as well as an extra airport supplement of **3€ (bought at the machines)**. In total you'll pay around **5€**. However, if you have an **abono de transporte** (monthly travel pass), the fee is waived! Remember that the metro closes from 1:30-6am, so if you have a flight at that time, you can take our next and favorite option, the **24/7 airport express bus** that costs the **same price**.

## 2. [Airport Express Bus](#):



from esmadrid.com

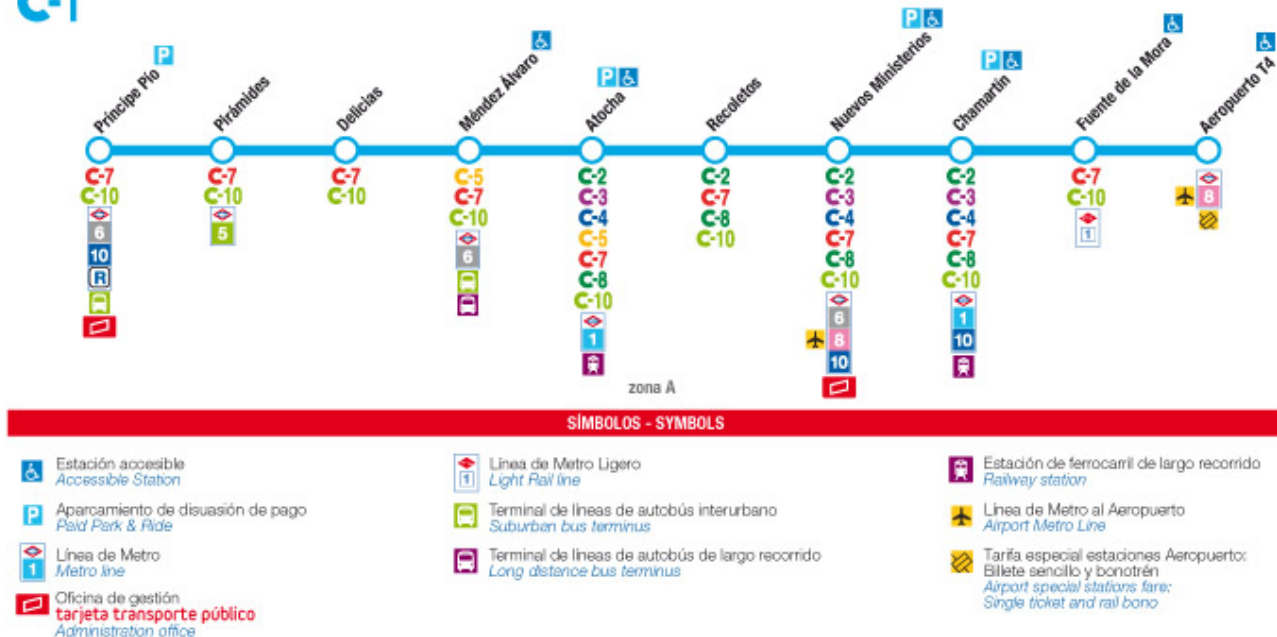
For just **5€**, you can hop on an incredibly convenient [Airport Express Bus](#) from the city center! During the day, from 6am-11:30pm, it leaves from **Atocha**, and makes stops at **Plaza de Cibeles** (next to the Palacio de Cibeles building) and **O'Donnell** (at the intersection with Doctor Esquerdo). At night, the bus leaves from **Cibeles** and continues to stop at **O'Donnell** (all night long). The express bus goes to terminals 1,2 & 4. The journey takes around **40 minutes** and runs every 15 minutes during the day, and every 35 minutes at night (you pay the 5€ on the bus in **cash**). Here's the bus [schedule](#).

## 3. [Cercanías: Línea C1](#)



## Príncipe Pío - Atocha - Recoletos - Chamartín - Aeropuerto T4

**C-1**



from mapamadrid.net

For **2.55€**, you can take the Cercanías train line 1 – **Línea C1** – to Terminal 4 (it doesn't go to the other terminals, but there is a free bus service within the airport that goes to all terminals). The C1 comes around every 30 minutes and can be picked up at the following main stations: **Chamartín, Nuevos Ministerios, Atocha, Méndez Álvaro, and Príncipe Pío**, plus a few more.

## 4. Taxi

A taxi-ride to and from the airport to anywhere in the center of Madrid costs a flat rate of **30€**. For no extra fee, you can pick up a taxi at the indicated taxi lines that you'll find throughout the airport and city center. You can also download the [free app MyTaxi](#) so you can have a taxi pick you up from your home at a certain time for the same set price.

## 5. Public City Bus

You can pick up the **200 bus** at **Ave. de América** for 1,50€. Here's the [200 bus schedule and stops](#), which runs from 5am-11pm, every 10-20 minutes depending on the time of day.

## 6. Private Airport Shuttle Bus

With [Aerocity](#), a 24/7 airport bus shuttle service, you can hire a van to pick you up from your house and drop you off directly at the airport. This service is good for groups, and especially if your flight is at an odd hour (i.e. late night/early morning) or if you have a lot of luggage. It usually costs around 10€ per person, but you can [put your address here](#) and get a quote.

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# How to Get Your Madrid Metro Card (Abono)

Not only is Madrid a great walking city, but it also has a fantastic **public transportation** system. The city offers **public buses, metro, and regional trains (Cercanías)**, which are all fast, reliable, and surprisingly clean.

If you plan on using public transportation, we highly recommend getting an “*abono*” or monthly travel card for unlimited trips. The “[Metro de Madrid App](#)” is also helpful when it comes to figuring out how to get from one metro stop to another.

## What is the Madrid metro card?

The *abono*, or **monthly card**, gives you full access to all forms of Madrid public transportation **for 30 days**. The price **depends on your age and what zone** of the city you want access to. The “normal” card is for ages 26-64 and covers **Zone A** (city center), for the price of **54,60€ per month**. The “youth” card, which is ages 26 and under, **is priced at 20€ for all zones** (see below for more details).

## What do I need?

These are the documents you will need to get your metro card:

- [Application document](#)
- A standard passport sized photo (which you can get at the photo booths in most metro stations, including Sol)
- An original copy of either your, EU ID, Spanish residency card, or passport

Once you have prepared these three things, you have two options depending if you are a **first-time** Madrid metro card applicant or not.

## If this is NOT your first time applying for the metro card:

- You can easily complete the process [online](#).
- After entering your form of identification, click on the *Iniciar solicitud on-line* button.
- Then, all you have to do is upload a copy of all three required files and once your application has been received, your card will be sent to your address in 7 days.

## If you are a first-time applicant:

- Make an appointment [online](#) by clicking the *Pedir cita previa* button after entering the form of identification you will be bringing to the in-person appointment.
- Then pick a metro office near you, date, and time.
- On the day of your appointment, bring the three required documents and your metro card will be given to you by the time you're finished.





Oficina de atención by [espormadrid.es](http://espormadrid.es)

## Which zones do I choose?

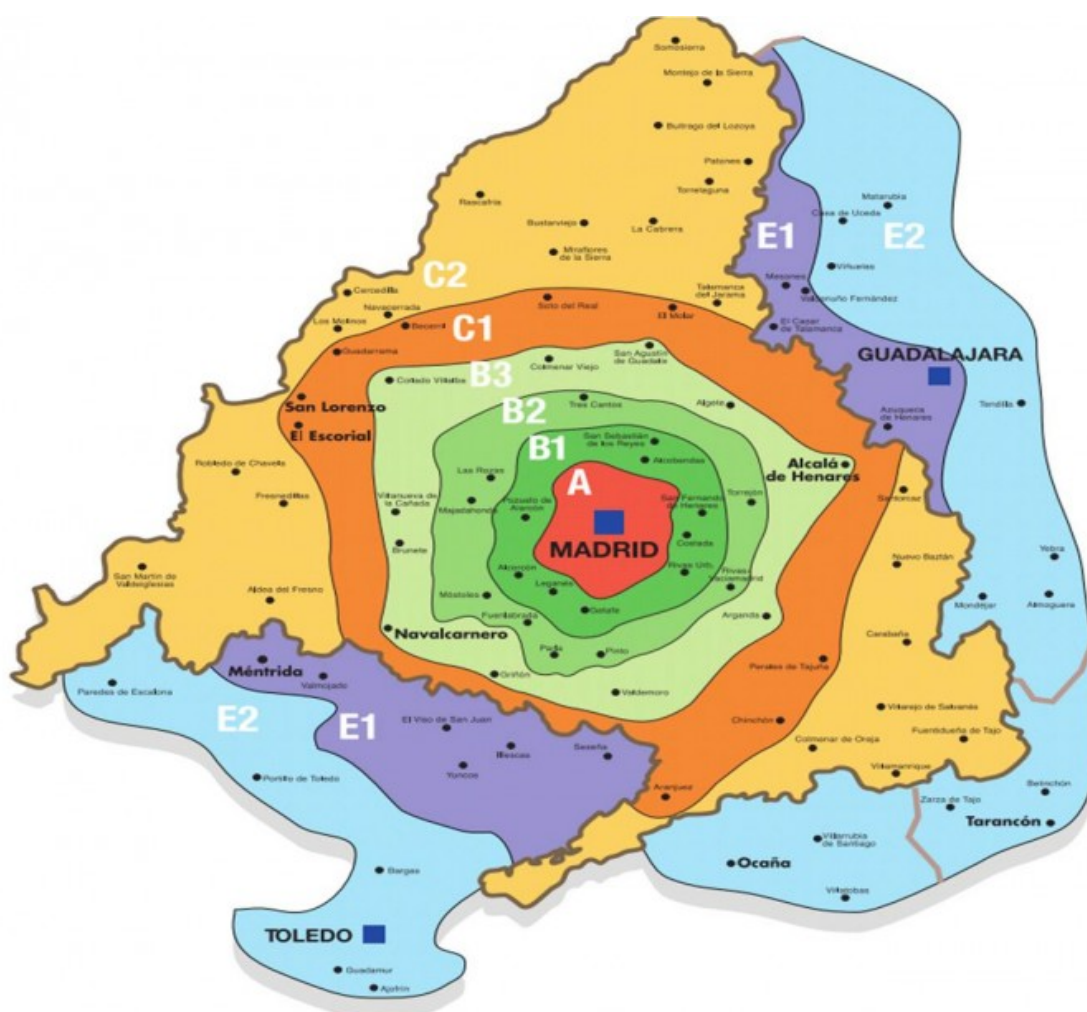
If you are new to the province of Madrid, you're probably unfamiliar with the different zones. When applying for your card, pick the zones that you might need to travel to by public transportation. The price will vary depending on which zones you want to include. Remember, if you are applying for the "youth" card, **all zones** are included for **20€** every 30 days.

### MONTHLY TRANSPORT PASS (PRICE IN EURO)

Pass/Zone	A	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	E1	E2
Normal	54,60€	63,70€	72€	82€	89,50€	99,30€	110,60€	131,80€
Young	20€							
Senior	12,30€						—	

If you're not sure what zones you might need, take a look at this map and see if there are any areas you might need access

to. Zone A is the standard zone that will give you full access to the city center. But if you think you will need to be traveling outside of zone A frequently, then it might be worth adding another zone to your card. If you're unsure of which cities are in which zones, check out the map below.



Hopefully this post cleared up any confusion on how to get your Madrid metro card. Now that you have a better understanding of the process, go get that *abono* and start exploring Madrid!

# Madrid Neighborhood Overview

Getting to know any city is easier if you get a general sense of the personality and location of each neighborhood. Madrid is enormous, so here's a roughly drawn map up top and a brief description of Madrid's central neighborhoods, which are often divided by just one street or overlapping. Sometimes, there are even disagreements as to where certain neighborhoods begin and end. However, Madrileños often associate *barrios* with their respective metro stops, so this is a good way to get an idea of where everything is. Happy exploring!

Also, you can watch a short [video series on Madrid's best neighborhoods](#) made by our friends at [Spotahome](#), an online housing booking agency. Enjoy!

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**SOL** is the city-center and home to Madrid's most popular meeting-point: "*the bear statue*" or as it's called in Spanish, "*El Oso y el Madroño*". Sol also marks *Kilometer Zero*, meaning that all of Madrid's building numbers and highways stem from there. It's literally the middle-point of the entire Iberian Peninsula. Sol is also the center-point of the city when it comes to transport, shopping and tourist destinations. All of Madrid's most popular shops are located within walking distance from Sol, and there are plenty of restaurants, both new and old, to dine at. The **Plaza Mayor** is a hop skip away, and a ten minute walk from Sol will conveniently bring you either to the [Prado Museum](#) or the **Royal Palace**. Watch a video about Madrid's historic center [here](#).





**Metros: Sol, Sevilla, Ópera, Gran Vía, Santo Domingo, Callao, Tirso de Molina** (Lines 1, 2, 3, 5)

[see all our posts about places to go and things to see in Sol](#)

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**CHUECA** is a stone's throw from *Gran Vía* and one of the best places to go out in Madrid. Its main street is **calle Hortaleza**. Known as the gay neighborhood for the past two decades, Chueca is undoubtedly one of the trendiest nightlife destinations in the city. During the day, Chueca offers fabulous restaurants, outdoor terraces and boutiques, especially a whole street of shoe stores on **c/ Augusto Figueroa**. Also along this street is another highlight—**Mercado**

[de San Antón](#)—a 3-story gourmet food market offering all types of delicious food and a fantastic [rooftop bar](#). Chueca is also proudly home to one of the world's largest Gay Pride Parades, as well as many other city activities. For its mix of edgy and high-end nightclubs, restaurants, bars, stores and ambience, Chueca is easy to fall in love with. Watch a video about [Chueca here](#).



At Mercado de San Antón's rooftop, just across the street from Plaza de Chueca



**Metros: Chueca, Gran Vía & Alonso Martínez** (Line 1 & 5) and **Tribunal** (Line 1 & 10)

[see all our posts about places to go and things to see in Chueca](#)

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**MALASANA** is known as the hippest part of town, especially for its history. Its main street, **Fuencarral**, runs parallel to calle Hortaleza, making Malasaña and Chueca very friendly neighbors. Its main plaza, **Plaza de Dos de Mayo**, was home to the battle in 1802 when the Madrileños rose against Napoleon on the same day. Now the plaza is full of cafés and restaurant terraces. **Malasaña** was also home to Madrid's breaking experimental movement known as **La Movida Madrileña** which sparked after the fall of Franco's dictatorship in the late 1970's. The highly drug-ridden and sexually-open movement ran throughout all of the 80's, and well into the 90's, leaving a heavy imprint on the neighborhood. It also seeped into Chueca. Remnants of graffiti can be seen as you walk through its tiny streets, and the seedier places have since been replaced by high-end tattoo parlors, vintage shops, and uber-trendy cafés, bars and restaurants. You could call it the **East Village** of Madrid. Here's a [video to watch about Malasaña](#).





Plaza de Dos de Mayo in Malasaña



**Metros: Tribunal** (Line 10 & 1), **Bilbao** (Line 1 & 4), **Noviciado & San Bernando** (Line 2)

[see all our posts about places to go and things to see in Malasaña](#)

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**HUERTAS** is colloquially named after its main street, Calle Huertas, although its official name is Barrio de las Letras. More than a neighborhood, we should call Huertas *a place to go out*. It's five minutes walking from Sol, and the perfect place to start your night. Huertas street is lined with all types of bars, some upscale and some divey, plus lots of great



restaurants too. There are many other little streets to discover such as **Calle Leon** (on the left in the photo below) also lined with fun bars and old-school delicatessens, boutiques and more. One of Huertas' highlights is **Restaurante Meceira** (amazing Galician food) and **Bar Populart** (often called Madrid's best jazz bar), though the list goes on. If you walk down **Huertas street**, you'll end up on the **Castellana**, Madrid's largest boulevard which at that point is actually called **Paseo del Prado**, full of museums and sightseeing activities, thus turning Huertas into a good day-neighborhood as well.



where calle huertas meets calle leon

**BARRIO DE LAS LETRAS** usually refers to the neighbourhood just above **calle Huertas**, and it is named after the many writers who lived there, such as Cervantes, Quevedo and Lope de Vega. You can actually visit Lope de Vega's former house which is

now a museum on **c/ Cervantes, 11**. Oddly enough, **c/ Lope de Vega** is parallel to it just one street down, where Cervantes is buried. This neighbourhood is slightly different from Huertas, as it is less of a party town. There are many arts and crafts fairs and cultural sites hidden away here.



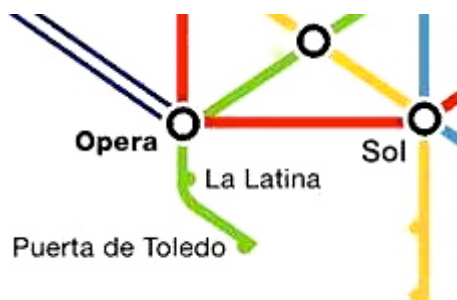
**Metros: Sol, Sevilla, Atocha, Tirso de Molina, Antón Martín** (also too many metro stops here)

[see all our posts about places to go and things to see in Huertas & Barrio de las Letras](#)

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**LA LATINA** boasts the city's oldest architecture (hence the name, the Latin Quarter) and some of its finest cuisine. Especially beautiful are the small alleyways nestled between 18th century buildings, and the tiny streets that turn into staircases, where restaurants put tables out on each individual stone step. On Sundays, La Latina's most famous street, **La Cava Baja**, turns into Madrid's place to be. This charming street is lined with tiny bars serving up cañas (draft beer), wines and tapas. It's tradition to go here on Sunday afternoons after the city's flea market, **El Rastro**, and hop from bar to bar until late.





**Metro: La Latina (Line 5)**

[see all our posts about places to go and things to see in La Latina](#)

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**LAVAPIÉS** is fast becoming Madrid's trendiest neighborhood, though it still has an underground and rugged feel, as it's been home to an influx of immigrants for many years, namely from African and Middle Eastern countries. Once considered the dodgier side of town, Lavapiés is now being embraced for its

edgy culture, diverse cuisine and alternative (oft-artsy) nightlife. Just one stop from Sol, Lavapiés is the perfect place to check out Madrid's changing personality, especially for its amazing Indian restaurants. In fact, I like to call Lavapiés street **Curry Row** because it is lined with Indian restaurant after Indian restaurant. The other famous street in Lavapiés—c/ **Argumosa**—is lined with more hipster bars and tantalising outdoor seating area. It stretches right to **Atocha Street** behind the **Reina Sofia Museum**.



**Metros:** **Lavapiés** (Line 3, yellow), extending to **Tirso de Molina, Antón Martín & Atocha** (Line 1)

[see all our posts about places to go and things to see in Lavapiés](#)

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**MONCLOA & ARGUELLES** are fantastic neighborhoods to live in, especially for young people. Madrid's main university, **La Complutense**, is very close by. The area is packed with neighborhood bars and shops. Plus it also has an important main street, **Calle Princesa**, which has all the major shops from Zara to El Corte Inglés. In fact, Calle Princesa turns into the **Gran Vía** right after **Plaza de España**. It's also a relatively quick walk from Sol (anywhere from 10 to 20 minutes depending on where you are, the neighborhood is quite large), and it is right next to the two most happening neighborhoods—**Malasaña** and **Chueca**. It also borders **Chamberí**, a slightly more expensive and residential neighborhood.





**Metros: Moncloa** (Line 3 & 6) and **Arguelles** (Line 3, 4 & 6)

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**CHAMBERI** is located just to the East of Moncloa and stretches to the **Castellana**, after which it becomes Salamanca (see below). You could call it Moncloa's older brother, as it is a much prettier neighbourhood and caters to a slightly older crowd. Chamberí boasts beautiful architecture—some of its buildings are absolutely gorgeous, such as Museo Soroya, Instituto Internacional and even the British Council. It also has quaint plazas such as **Plaza de Chamberí** and **Plaza de Olavide**, the latter being my favorite **plaza for drinking and terraza time in all of Madrid**. Chamberí is also a business district with many offices and thus plenty of restaurants and bars throughout the area. One of the best streets for wining and dining is **Calle Ponzano**, where you can find great restaurants like **Bar Lambuzo** and **Sala de Despiece**



my favorite plaza in Madrid, Plaza Olavide



**Metros:** Bilbao, Iglesia and Rios Rosas, Alonso Martínez, Gregorio Marañón, Colón, Rubén Darío, San Bernando, Quevedo, Canal

[see all our posts about places to go and things to see in Chamberí](#)

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**RETIRO** is Madrid's most popular city park and also refers to



the **residential neighbourhood** which borders the park's eastern side. It's a great neighbourhood to live in if you enjoy the **quiet**, as you can leave the city's hustle and bustle on the other side of the park. Inside Retiro you can enjoy plenty of beautiful attractions, such as the lake in the photo below, as well as a **glass palace**, **rose garden** and inviting **green lawns**. Also, many free activities are held regularly, from **bootcamp** and **running clubs**, to **roller skating** and **yoga lessons**.



**Metros: Retiro, Príncipe de Vergara, Ibiza and Sáinz de Baranda**

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**SALAMANCA** is Madrid's most upscale neighbourhood. Let's call it Madrid's "**Upper East Side**" (a.k.a. where Carrie Bradshaw lived in NY). Located just above Retiro Park and to the East of the Castellana, this neighborhood's two main streets are Serrano and Velázquez (as are the metro stops with the same name). It is much quieter than the other neighbourhoods mentioned on this list. As in most fancy neighborhoods, you will find the high-end shoe stores, top-notch restaurants and prime real estate. Barrio Salamanca is no exception. However, chique nightclubs and lounges aside, you will also be pleasantly surprised to find many hidden gems. After all, Salamanca is a neighborhood where people live in, and they too have mom and pop shops and friendly bars. You just have to search for them... Here's a [video about Barrio Salamanca](#).



**Metros: Príncipe de Vergara, Retiro & Goya (Line 2), Serrano, Velázquez, Lista & Goya (Line 4) Núñez de Balbao (Line 5)**

[see all our posts about places to go and things to see in Salamanca](#)

Hope this list is helpful! It's one of those articles that is going to keep growing and growing, by way of adding photos, more posts and more neighborhoods! If you have any specific requests don't think twice about letting us know.



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# Best Places to Break a Sweat in Madrid

In addition to keeping fit, a big plus of joining a gym, dance class or fitness group in Madrid is getting to meet people – I honestly can't recommend a better way to make friends in the city, especially if you're no longer at university. And if you're only passing through Madrid for a short while, I still recommend dropping in on a dance class or going for an organized hike or [bike ride](#), as a non-conventional way to get a feel for the city.

The best place to find out about group fitness activities is through [meetup.com](#). And if you want to go **cycling, running or swimming**, check out our previous posts: [Cycling in Madrid: A beginner's guide](#), [Exercise opportunities in Madrid](#) and [Where to swim in winter in Madrid](#).



## **Now, here's a guide to Madrid's best gyms, dance and fitness clubs.**

Before signing up, we recommend taking a look at a few different gyms (they usually offer a free trial), considering which one is closest to your home, work or university, and trying to get a long-term contract (careful with this one, make sure you really like the place before you sign up).

## **Madrid has three types of gyms and studios:**

- (A) Public
- (B) Private (including dance & yoga studios)
- (C) Big Chains

Here are a few examples of our favorite places to keep fit, as well as useful links to find out about other options:

## A) Public GYMS

1. [Casa de Campo's public gym](#) has one of the best facilities in the city, especially for its swimming pools (winter and summer), which make this place perfect for pool lovers.

- [Official Madrid Site](#)
- **Address:** Pase Puerta del Angel, 7 (metros: Lago, Puerta del Ángel)

2. Another great swimming pool can be found in the heart of Chueca, at a public gym called [Centro Deportivo Municipal Escuelas de San Antón](#). Although this gym is small and does not have fitness classes, its glass-covered indoor pool is gigantic and the neighbourhood is unbeatable!

- [Official Madrid Site](#)
- **Address:** c/ Farmacia, 13 (metros: Chueca/Tribunal/Alonso Martínez/Gran Vía)

Madrid public GYM [full list](#) (in Spanish).

## B) Private GYMS, fitness clubs & groups. For something special

These private gyms are for those seeking something different, a friendly ambience and not-your-average fitness class. Here are my top three private gyms in Madrid, plus our recommended dance and yoga studios, and fun fitness groups.

1. [Club Deportivo Metropolitano](#). This one is really convenient for those who live close to Complutense University, as it has a huge variety of activities such as martial arts, boxing,

capoeira, wall climbing, pilates, yoga, a pool and much, much more.

- [Website](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- **Facilities:** swimming pool, weight and fitness room, pilates & yoga room, martial arts room, boxing ring, climbing wall
- **Address:** Calle Aravaca, 7 (Metro: Guzmán el Bueno)

**2. Centro el Horno.** My favourite spot in the city, “The Oven” is both a full dance studio and gym. At **Centro el Horno**, you will find every type of dance class under the sun, for both professionals and amateurs who just want to have fun in Madrid. Please stop by the **acrobatics** class, it will make your day! There’s also pole dancing, zumba, classical ballet, flamenco, crossfit, contemporary, hip-hop, you name it.

- [Website](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle Esgrima, 11 (Metro: Tirso de Molina)

**3. CrossFit Krig.** I came here once and, literally, I couldn’t move my body after one session. You have to be really tough to keep going here. There is no gym in CrossFit Krig, instead you will find the most hardcore sports center—they only offer CrossFit, straight-up.

- [Website](#)
- **Address:** two locations:
  - Cuatro Caminos: Calle Guipuzcoa, 11 (Metro: Cuatro Caminos)
  - Retiro: Calle Vicente Caballero, 10 (Metro: O’Donnell or Sainz de Baranda)

\*Another gym recommended to me by others is [Soho Studio](#), great for cross-fit, pilates and all that, **near metro Bilbao**.



## Recommended Dance Studios:

### 1. [El Horno](#), for all dance styles (mentioned above)

- Although dance classes at El Horno are almost always open levels, meaning it's hard to find an advanced class, you'll find an amazing quantity of dance styles here and wonderful teachers. This is our favorite dance studio by far. Here you can really delve into new activities, from pole dancing and acrobatics, to classical ballet or hip hop.

### 2. [Amor de Dios](#), for the best flamenco dance classes

- Want to take a flamenco class in a studio that actually smells like flamenco? Well, this is your place! As you step inside the dance studio, which is situated atop a fish market, you will immediately feel the authentic flamenco vibe. It's the real deal.

### 3. [Karen Taft](#) & [Madrid Dance Center](#), for serious and more traditional dance classes

- If you're looking for high quality ballet, jazz, modern or contemporary dance classes, try either of these two studios, both of which offer a young professionals program and top instructors.

## Recommended Yoga Studios:

Madrid is full of yoga and pilates studios, thus finding the right one for you can be tricky. Luckily, most yoga studios offer a free first class or inexpensive trial week, so don't be afraid to drop in on a few different classes before picking your studio:

- For Yoga outdoors:
  - [Yoga at Retiro Park](#) has become very popular, and isn't limited to vinyasa. You can also find

acroyoga and more. Check out the link.

- For Bikram Yoga, you can go to:
  - [Bikram Yoga Center](#): in the hip neighbourhood of Chueca.
  - [Bikram Yoga](#): in the hip neighbourhood of Malasaña (this web also offers info on workshops)
- For Ashtanga Yoga:
  - [Yoga at Espiritu 23](#): For a very inexpensive and good quality yoga class, you can go to a cultural center in Malasaña called Espiritu 23

## Recommended Fitness Clubs & Groups:

If you're not into the standard kind of workout, not to worry. You can join running groups in Retiro, weekend hiking groups to Madrid's mountains and even go rock climbing in the outskirts. The best place to find out about fun fitness groups is at [Meetup.com](#) (make sure to look under all the different categories: [health & well-being](#), [fitness](#), [sports & recreation](#), and [dance](#)). Here you can find long-boarding, salsa classes, yoga, everything!

Here are two clubs that I've heard particularly good things about, being great ways to get to know new people and the city:

### 1. Running Company Madrid:

- Organised running and training sessions starting near Atocha.
- Check out their [schedule](#) and different levels. [Facebook](#) and [Web](#)

### 2. Skating (Roller Blading)

- [Skating classes in Retiro and Madrid Rio](#), they also have free routes and activities.
- [Facebook Skating Meet-up Group](#) where people organize free meet-ups to skate around the city

every day

## C) Big chains

As in any other city, you will find some of the big GYM chains. I personally don't find them to be that cool, but they do have great prices and some have swimming pools and passes that allow you access to various locations around the city. Here is a list of them:

- [Holiday Gym](#)
- [McFit](#)
- [Body Factory](#)
- [Centro Wellness](#) (the Manuel Becerra location has a huge pool)
- [Altafit](#)

## Also check out:

- [Cycling in Madrid: A beginner's guide](#)
- [Exercise opportunities in Madrid](#)
- [Where to swim in winter in Madrid](#)

What's your favorite place to keep fit in Madrid? Let us know so we can add it to this list!

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# Madrid Museums: The Obvious and Not-so-obvious (and how to get in for free)

Here's a long list of Madrid museums worth visiting while you're here. And to make things easier, we're breaking it down into two parts: the obvious (like the Prado) and the not-so-obvious (like Cerralbo). We'll also tell you how to get in for free!

If you've already read up on the famous Madrid museums, then scroll down...

## The Obvious:

All of these Madrid museums are classified as "obvious" because they're situated along the two great boulevards – Paseo del Prado and Paseo de Recoletos – where you'll find the city's finest arts institutions, including the *Golden Triangle of Art* which refers to the first three institutions on this list. Only one place is not situated here – the Royal Palace.

### 1. [Prado Museum](#)

Spain's national art museum houses a wide collection of European art from the 12th to the early 19th centuries, and its most notable works are by Spanish painters, Diego Velázquez, Francisco de Goya and El Greco. Considered one of the best museums in the world, the Prado's most famous piece is *Las Meninas* by Velazquez. Do give yourself a few hours to walk around – the Prado is gigantic!

#### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always for under-18-year-olds and students ages 18-25 (with valid ID); Sundays and holidays from

5pm-7pm; and Mon-Sat from 6pm-8pm.

**Prices & Hours**: General admission 14€. Open Mon-Sat from 10am-8pm. Sundays and holidays from 10am-7pm.

**Metro**: Banco de España

**Where**: Paseo del Prado (s/n)

## 2. **Reina Sofia Museum**



Spain's national museum of 20th-century art is located at the bottom of El Paseo del Prado, near Atocha train station. The Reina Sofia's permanent collection consists of art by Spanish painters such as Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dalí, and its most famous piece is Picasso's *Guernica*. Temporary exhibits feature works by international artists, plus the building's impressive architecture and free-access art library are alone worth a visit!

**Website**

**When is it free?** Sundays from 1:30pm-7pm; weekdays from 7-9pm (except Tuesdays).

**Prices & Hours**: Mon-Sat from 10am-9pm and Sundays from

10am-7pm. Closed on Tuesdays.

**Metro:** Atocha

**Where:** c/ Santa Isabel, 52

Additionally, you can visit a glass palace situated in the middle of Retiro Park featuring works from the museum.



### 3. **Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza**

This is my brother's favorite. In fact, he loved the Thyssen so much that he actually visited it two days in a row (during a five-day visit). The Thyssen is named after its founder and houses one of the largest private collections in the world. You'll find an amazing permanent collection of more than 1,600 masterpiece paintings spanning seven centuries of art and representing a myriad of genres, as well as must-see temporary exhibits showcasing Van Gogh to Pop Art.



### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Mondays 12-4pm.

**Hours:** Mondays 12pm-4pm; Tues-Sun 10am-7pm.

**Metro:** Banco de España

**Where:** Paseo del Prado, 8

## 4. [Caixa Forum](#)



Created by the Catalan bank, La Caixa, the first thing that stands out about Caixaforum is its impressive exterior design, including an urban garden wall. As you step inside, you'll notice that the building's interior design follows suit. Architecture aside, here you'll see outstanding temporary exhibits on everything from up-and-coming photographers to Pixar!

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always free for La Caixa clients and under-16-year-olds.

**Prices & Hours:** General Admission €4. Open Sun-Mon from 10am-8pm

**Metro:** Atocha

**Where:** Paseo del Prado, 36

## 5. The Royal Palace

The Royal Palace is one of the most beautiful spots in the city, situated in Plaza de Oriente, facing the Royal Opera House and overlooking the Gardens of Sabatini. It's the official residence of the King of Spain, although he doesn't actually live there. Used today for national ceremonies and as a popular museum, Madrid's Palacio Real is the largest royal palace in all of Western Europe, boasting 3,418 rooms which are ornately decorated with fine paintings, sculptures and tapestries. One last thing – if you go here, you absolutely must pay a visit to its gardens, called “**El Campo del Moro**”, located just behind the palace (always free and open to the public at the same hours as the palace).

### Website

**When is it free?** For anyone with an EU or Iberoamerican passport/residency card/work permit from Mon-Thurs from 4pm-6pm during April-Sept; and from 6pm-8pm during Oct-Mar.

**Prices & Hours:** Normal entrance fee is 10€. Students with valid ID get a discount (5€). In Winter (Oct-Mar) open daily from 10am-6pm and in Summer (Apr-Sep) open daily from 10am-8pm.

**Metro:** Ópera (line 5 & 2) and Principe Pio (line 10)

**Where:** c/ Bailén (s/n)

## 6. Palacio de Cibeles



Madrid's most emblematic building, Palacio de Cibeles is situated in the famous Plaza de Cibeles which joins Madrid's two boulevards – Paseo del Prado and Paseo de Recoletos. One wouldn't imagine that this ornately decorated palace was once Madrid's post office, but it was indeed! It was turned into a cultural center in 2013, and now holds free exhibits throughout its first four floors. It also boasts a café, restaurant, and [a rooftop terrace on the 6th floor](#) that offers breathtakingly beautiful views of the city. You can also visit the lookout point at the top of the building for just 2€, where you'll surely get one of your best pics of Madrid.

### **The lookout point (mirador):**

**When is it free?** Free entrance every first Wednesday of the month.

**Price & Hours:** 2€ for adults and 0,50€ for children under 12 years of age. Visits are held every thirty minutes from Tues-Sun from 10:30am-1:30pm and from 4pm-7pm. Closed on Mondays. You must reserve tickets at the CentroCentro office



situated near the main door of the building.

### **The exhibition spaces:**

#### **Website**

**When is it free?** Always.

**Hours:** Mon-Sun from 10am-8pm. Closed on Mondays.

**Metro:** Banco de España

**Where:** Plaza Cibeles, 1

## **The Not-So-Obvious**

Madrid has some wonderful art havens scattered about the city which are less spoken of, although still much deserving of a visit. Here are some of our favorites:

### **1. La Casa Encendida**

Created by the bank, Caja Madrid, you'll find "The Burning House" located just a five-minute walk from the Reina Sofia Museum. This arts and cultural center showcases modern and contemporary art exhibits, and also hosts many cultural events, screenings, workshops concerts, and more. Entrance is always free, and the café is very nice too.

#### **Website**

**When is it free?** Always.

**Hours:** 10am-10pm everyday

**Metro:** Embajadores

**Where:** Ronda de Valencia, 2

### **2. El Matadero**



This is one of our absolute favorite spots in Madrid. A former pig slaughterhouse, El Matadero was turned into an arts and cultural center in 2006. It has many warehouses (naves) showcasing film, theater performances and art galleries, as well as events and a great café called “La Cantina” where you can taste local food products from Madrid. We highly recommend going here, and taking a stroll along Madrid’s river (Madrid Río) afterwards which is just across the street. [Here’s a more in-depth article we wrote about El Matadero.](#)

#### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always

**Hours:** Tues-Fri from 4pm to 10pm; Sat-Sun from 11am to 9pm

**Metro:** Legazpi (line 3, yellow)

**Where:** Paseo de la Chopera, 14

### **3. [Museo Naval](#)**

Although Spain’s maritime museum is situated on the Paseo del Prado, we don’t consider it as obvious as the ones listed above. Many people are surprised when they go here, precisely because it’s not talked about enough. The exhibits take you

through Spain's maritime history in chronological order, showcasing artefacts such as old coins, maps, books, weapons, and more.

[Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always (recommended donation of 3€)

**Hours:** Tues-Sun from 10am-7pm. (During August it closes at 3pm). Closed on Monday.

**Metro:** Banco de España

**Where:** Paseo del Prado, 5

## 4. [Museo del Romanticismo](#)



Located in the heart of Madrid's trendiest neighborhoods – Malasaña and Chueca – you should definitely stop by this museum if you're in the area. El Museo del Romanticismo gives you insight into the history, art and daily life in Spain

during the Romantic Era (European intellectual movement during the 19th C). And I must admit that my favorite thing about this museum is its quaint and hidden garden café. If you're not into museums, at least pop in for a coffee or tea.

#### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Saturdays from 2pm onwards and Sundays

**Prices & Hours:** General admission 4€. Closed on Mondays. Sundays from 10am-3pm. In Summer (May 1-Oct 31) Tues-Sat from 9:30am-8:30pm. In Winter, (Nov 1-Apr 30) from 9:30am-6:30pm.

**Metro:** Tribunal or Alonso Martínez

**Where:** Calle San Mateo, 13

## 5. [Museo Sorolla](#)

This charming museum is my mother-in-law's favorite, not only for its beautiful art pieces but also for the old architecture of the building itself, which was the former private residence of Spanish painter, Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida (1863 – 1923), who is especially famous for his portraits and landscapes. Another note – my mother fell in love with this museum too.

#### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Saturdays from 2pm onwards, and Sundays.

**Prices & Hours:** General admission 3€. Tues-Sat from 9:30am-8pm. Sundays from 10am-3pm. Closed on Mondays.

**Metro:** Iglesia and Rubén Darío

**Where:** Paseo del General Martínez Campos, 37

## 6. [Museo Cerralbo](#)

[The Cerralbo Museum](#) is by far one of my favorite places in Madrid. Tucked away on a side street near Plaza de España and Templo de Debod, this stunning little museum was a former residence of the Marquis of Cerralbo, who lived here with his family in the 19th century. As you walk through the mansion's corridors and up the elegant stairwell to the ballroom, you'll



find everything remains exactly in tact, from the furniture and art pieces to the wall colors and lighting. Read our full post: [Museo Cerralbo, an art lover's dream house](#).

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** After 2pm on Saturdays; Thursdays from 5pm-8pm; Sundays.

**[Prices & hours](#):** General admission €3. Open Tues–Sat 9:30am-3pm; Thursday also from 5-8pm; Sundays and holidays from 10am-3pm. I highly recommend [booking a guided tour](#) in English, Spanish or French

**Metro:** Plaza de España

**Where:** Calle Ventura Rodríguez, 17

## 7. [Casa Museo Lope de Vega](#)

This 16th-century house was the former home of Spanish writer, Lope de Vega, who was famous during the “Golden Age” of Spanish literature. His house is located in Madrid’s “Barrio de las Letras”, a central neighborhood whose streets are named after the several famous Golden Age writers who also lived there, such as Miguel de Cervantes, Quevedo and Góngora. Lope de Vega resided in this house during the last 25 years of his life, from 1610-35. His home was turned into a national monument and museum in 1935. Here you can see his private collection of art, furniture, books and more. To visit, you **must make a reservation in advance** for a free, guided tour (see details below).

### [Website](#)

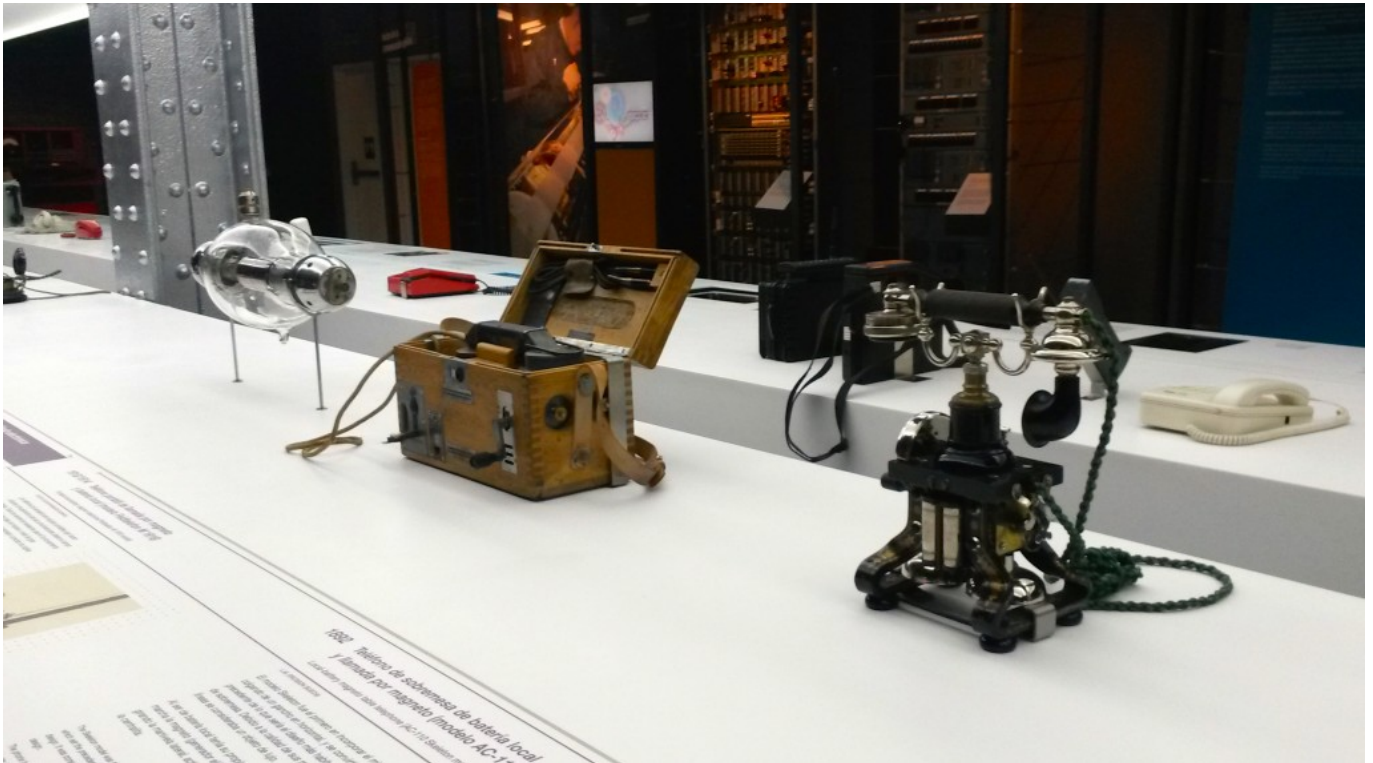
**When is it free?** Always.

**[Hours](#):** Tues-Sun from 10am-6pm. Guided tours begin every half hour and are available in Spanish, English and French. [Make a Reservation by](#) telephone (91 429 92 16) or email (casamuseolopedevega@madrid.org).

**Metro:** Antón Martín and Sol

**Where:** Calle de Cervantes, 11

## 8. Espacio Fundación Telefónica



This arts and cultural exhibition space was created by the telecommunications company, Telefónica, and is always free and conveniently located on the Gran Vía. We highly recommend paying a visit, not only because it's free and has good air conditioning, but also because you'll find surprisingly current and interactive art exhibits. Plus, one of our Naked Madrid writers, Alex, recommends this place as a [\*\*great first date idea!\*\*](#)

### Website

**When is it free?** Always.

**Hours:** every day from 10am-8pm.

**Metro:** Gran Vía (line 1 & 5)

**Where:** c/ Fuencarral, 3

## 9. Museo de América

This national museum houses 25,000 pieces of art and historical artifacts from the American continent. My friend, Ryan, wanted to make sure that I mentioned the shrunken heads

on display here (apparently, native Americans used to shrink dead humans' heads and use them as talismans).

**Website**

**When is it free?** For under-18-year-olds, over-65, university students and unemployed (with valid ID), holders of carné joven.

**Prices & Hours:** General Admission 3€. Tues-Sat from 9:30am-3pm; Thurs from 9:30am-3pm; Sundays from 10am-3pm; Closed on Mondays.

**Metro:** Moncloa

**Where:** Avenida de los Reyes Católicos, 6

## 10. **Fundación Mapfre**

This foundation was created by the insurance company, Mapfre, and exhibits art mostly from the last third of the 19th century to after World War II. It also showcases a lot of photography. The foundation has two rooms, both located next to each other.

**Website**

**When is it free?** Always.

**Hours:** Mon from 2pm-8pm. Tues-Sat from 10am-8pm. Sun/holidays from 11am-7pm.

**Metro:** Colón

**Where:** Paseo de Recoletos, 23

## 11. **Conde Duque**



I have particularly fond memories of this cultural center because I used to go here often during university. Located in one of my favorite neighborhoods – Conde Duque – this building served as the former barracks of the Royal Guard Corps and was turned into a cultural center in 1983. Ever since, it has used its enormous space wisely. Here you can see free exhibits including large scale art projects, photography and documentaries. Its space is also used for concerts, performances, dance rehearsals, book archives, and even [outdoor cinema](#) which runs from July through September.

#### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always.

**Hours:** Tues-Sat from 10.30am-2pm and 5.30pm-9pm.  
Sundays/Holidays from 10.30am-2pm.

**Metro:** Noviciado, Plaza de España, San Bernardo and Ventura Rodríguez.

**Where:** Calle Conde Duque 11

## 12. [Museo del Traje](#)

Madrid's fashion museum showcases different modes throughout



the centuries. Although its current name is rather recent, the museum first opened in 1925 as “Exposición del Traje Regional e Histórico”, meaning the *exhibit on regional and historic attire*. Today it showcases a wide range of collections as well as cool activities and events which you can see [here](#).

#### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Saturdays from 2:30pm on; Sundays. If you're under 18, over 65, a student between 18-28 years old.

**Prices & Hours:** General admission is 3€. Open Tues-Sat from 9:30am-7pm. Sundays and holidays from 10am-3pm.

**Metro:** Moncloa

**Where:** Avenida de Juan de Herrera, 2.

## 13. [La Tabacalera Promoción del Arte](#)

[La Tabacalera](#) is a very unique community center in Madrid that occupies an abandoned factory and holds free activities on a daily basis, from salsa and capoeira classes to concerts and markets. Adjacent to the community area is an exhibition space that is free and open to the public, and mainly showcases photography and contemporary art works. Warning: it's a large and almost spooky space.

#### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always

**Hours:** Mon-Fri from 12pm-8pm. Saturday, Sunday and holidays from 11am-8pm. Closed on Mondays.

**Metro:** Embajadores

**Where:** Calle Embajadores 51 (the community center is number 53)

## General Information:

\*Most museums allow free entrance to under-18-year-olds and over-65-year-olds, as well as free entrance or a considerable discount to university students with valid ID and groups of over 5 people.

**\*\*All of Madrid's museums allow free entrance on the following holidays: April 18th (World Heritage Day), May 18th (International Museum Day), October 12th (National Spanish Holiday) and December 6th (Day of the Spanish Constitution).**

**As always, if we've left out any of your favorite art institutions or museums, please let us know! We intend on expanding this list.**

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## Cuenca

### What to see:

Less than two hours driving from Madrid, you'll find the city of **Cuenca**, which is a "must-see" kind of place if you're travelling around Spain. **Cuenca** was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999 and its *Hanging Houses* well deserve such honor.

These iconic houses from Cuenca were built in the 15th century and the best way to see them is from the bridge of San Pablo. Another city monument is the Cathedral of Cuenca, whose construction started in the 12th century.

Once you walk around the city and check out other important sites, you should also enjoy the city's gastronomy. As in most parts of Spain, Cuenca has a passion for meat and a tender roast lamb is its specialty. I can't tell you which is the best "Asador" or rotisserie in the city, but here's a link to [Trip Advisor](#). Hope you have fun finding the right place

(please let us know if you do)!

## How to get there:

- **By Train (AVE-Medium Distance)**

**Depart from: Atocha train station**

**Schedule:**

Departure ([Madrid-Cuenca](#))

Return ([Cuenca-Madrid](#))

**Duration:** approx. 50min (AVE) 2h 50min (Medium distance)

**Price AVE (High speed): 24€** (round trip approx. 48€).

**Price (medium distance): 14€** (round trip approx. 28€).

- **By bus**

**Depart from: Méndez Álvarez**

**Schedule:** [Check Avanza web site \(English\)](#)

**Duration:** approx. 2 hour 10 min

**Price: 14€** (round trip 28€)

## Where to find it on a map: