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!

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***

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/ Agusto 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



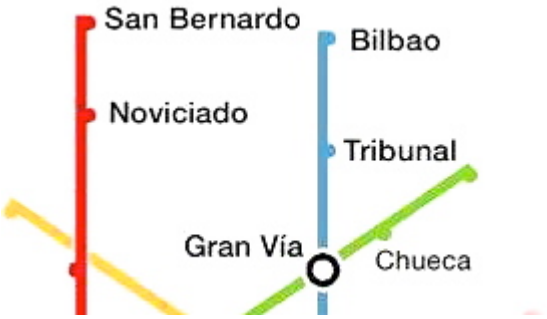
Metros: Chueca, Gran Vía & Alonso Martínez (Line 1 & 5) and **Tribunal** (Line 1 & 10)

*see all our posts about places to go and things to see in **Chueca***

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***

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***

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***

LAVAPIES 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***

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)

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***

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

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.