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

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!

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:

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4 Best City Biking Routes for Tourists in Madrid

There is no such thing as the best city in the world (even though New Yorkers like to claim the title). From what I can see, however, Madrid is getting pretty close. You've probably noticed that Madrid's public bike system, **BiciMad**, is fully up and running. Madrid's public bikes are **electric-powered** which is awesome because you barely break a sweat while going up the city's many hills. This also means that you can see Madrid's most emblematic buildings, plazas, parks and river all in one day, on two wheels.

Now that cycling in Madrid has been made easy, **here are four beautiful cycling routes in the city-center!** I've attached a **google map** with each route, but you really can't get lost. Combine these routes as you wish, as they're not too long and meant to be enjoyed, so you can feel free to wander off and explore. Happy cycling!!!

If you want to know how **BiciMad** works, check out our post:

"**Electric city bikes in Madrid, a city that's turning bike-friendly**"

1. Atocha – Paseo del Prado – Recoletos



This first route starts at "*Ministerio de Agricultura*" or Ministry of Agriculture building. This tour is very easy to bike because the streets are flat and wide. There is also a pretty boulevard which goes all the way up Paseo del Prado and Castellana. You will see some of the main buildings in the city like the Prado Museum, Caixa Forum and the National Library. You'll also pass through three of the most important and well-known squares (plazas) in Madrid: Neptuno, Cibeles and Colón.


EL GRECO &
LA PINTURA
MODERNA
¡MADRID!
PRECAUCIÓN



Find the route on the map:

2. Cibeles – Alcala – Retiro Park



While New York and London have, respectively, Central Park and Hyde Park, we *Madrileños* have **Retiro Park**. Maybe it's not that famous or was never featured in a Hollywood production, but we are as proud as can be of our city's beautiful green oasis. The route through Retiro is also really easy to bike, however, you can start it at *"Plaza de la Independencia"*, also known as Puerta de Alcalá, to make it even easier. In Retiro Park, you'll see some of Madrid's most stunning places such as *"Palacio de Cristal" (*main pic at the top) and *"Retiro Lake"* where you can rent a rowboat.





Find the route in the map:

3. Palacio – Casa de Campo



What I like most about this route is that you get to leave the city for a while. We first start at the Madrid's Royal Palace and take a ride around to enjoy it in all its glory from front to back. Then, we head for *"Casa de Campo"*, where there are always groups of mountain-bikers going up and down the park's infinite paths. If you're not familiar with Casa de Campo, it's much bigger than Retiro, and looks more like a forest– it has a great public swimming pool and lake where people do water sports. Of course, there are bars too. As for this route's level, I wouldn't say it's easy one but it's definitely doable. It all depends on how far you go into *"Casa de Campo"* .





Find the route in the map:

4. Matadero – Madrid Rio – Principe Pio



Just a few years ago, the **Manzanares River** was surrounded by an ugly highway. Thanks to Madrid's former mayor who spent who knows how much money on its renovation, now we are enjoying *"Madrid Rio"* to the max. Starting at **Principe Pio**, you will enter Madrid Rio to bike along different paths and stumble upon fun (and free) activities like a "*tirolina*" or zip-line, playgrounds (for adults too!) and one of Madrid's urban beaches, a.k.a. sprinklers, that we love when summer comes. Then you will end up at one of my favorite spots in the city, **Matadero Madrid**, an old slaughterhouse which is now an awesome and free cultural center. Here is a link to our post on **El Matadero**.





Find the route in the map:

Cercedilla


LA CURVA
BAR
LA CURVA BA



What to see:

When I think of *Cercedilla*, the first thing that pops into my head is nature. An hour from Madrid, this mountainous town is an incredible place for hiking, adventure activities and typical, no-frills kind of food.

In the summer, there's also an amazing natural swimming pool, meaning a manmade pool filled with natural running water from the mountain's streams and rivers, so you can take a refreshing dip while enjoying the beautiful surroundings.

If you'd like to go to Cercedilla but the idea of hiking scares you, there's a train that travels around the Guadarrama mountains. The train is called "*Tren de la naturaleza*" and runs every Thursday and Friday from the beginning of July to the end of September.

How to get there:

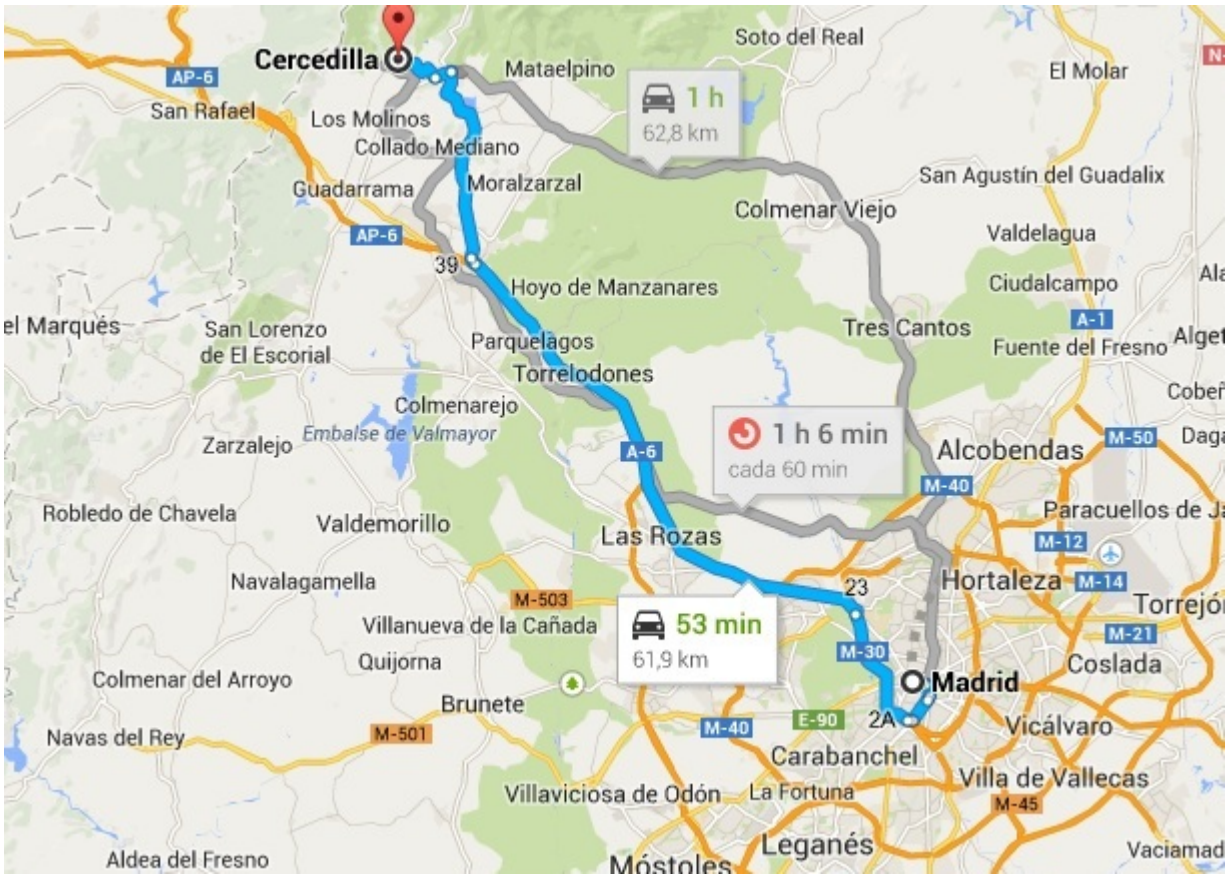
- **By Train (Cercanias)**

  Depart from: Chamartín train station
  Schedule:
Departure (Madrid – Cercedilla (Cercanias))
Return (Cercedilla – Madrid (Cercanias))
  Duration: approx. **1 hour**
  Price: 4€ (round trip approx. 8€).

- **By bus**

  Depart from: Moncloa. 684 bus
  Schedule:
Departure (Madrid – Cercedilla (Bus))
Return (Cercedilla – Madrid (Bus))
  Duration: approx. **1 hour 10 min**
  Price: 5,10€ (round trip 10,20€)

Where to find it on a map:


Cercedilla
Soto del Real
Mataelpino
El Molar
AP-6
San Rafael
Los Molinos
Collado Mediano
1 h
62,8 km
Guadarrama
Moralzarzal
San Agustín del Guadalix
Colmenar Viejo
AP-6
Valdelagua
39
Hoyo de Manzanares
Ciudalcampo
el Marqués
San Lorenzo
de El Escorial
Parquelagos
Tres Cantos
A-1
Fuente del Fresno
Torrelodones
Colmenarejo
1 h 6 min
cada 60 min
Zarzalejo
Embalse de Valmayor
A-6
Alcobendas
M-50
M-40
Robledo de Chavela
Valdemorillo
Las Rozas
Paracuellos de Ja
M-12
Navalagamella
23
Hortaleza
M-14
M-503
Villanueva de la Cañada
53 min
61,9 km
M-21
Quijorna
M-30
Coslada
Colmenar del Arroyo
Madrid
Brunete
M-40
E-90
2A
Vicálvaro
Navas del Rey
M-501
Carabanchel
Villa de Vallecas
Villaviciosa de Odón
La Fortuna
M-45
Leganés
Aldea del Fresno
Móstoles

Rascafría



What to see:

There is a proverb in Spanish that goes: *“quien algo quiere, algo le cuesta.”* It’s the Spanish way of saying: “no pain, no gain.” I say this because, if you don’t have a car, Rascafría is far from the city and inconvenient. However, if you have wheels, don’t miss the opportunity to drive along the **northern mountains of Madrid and get away from the city**. Once you get there, you won’t regret it.

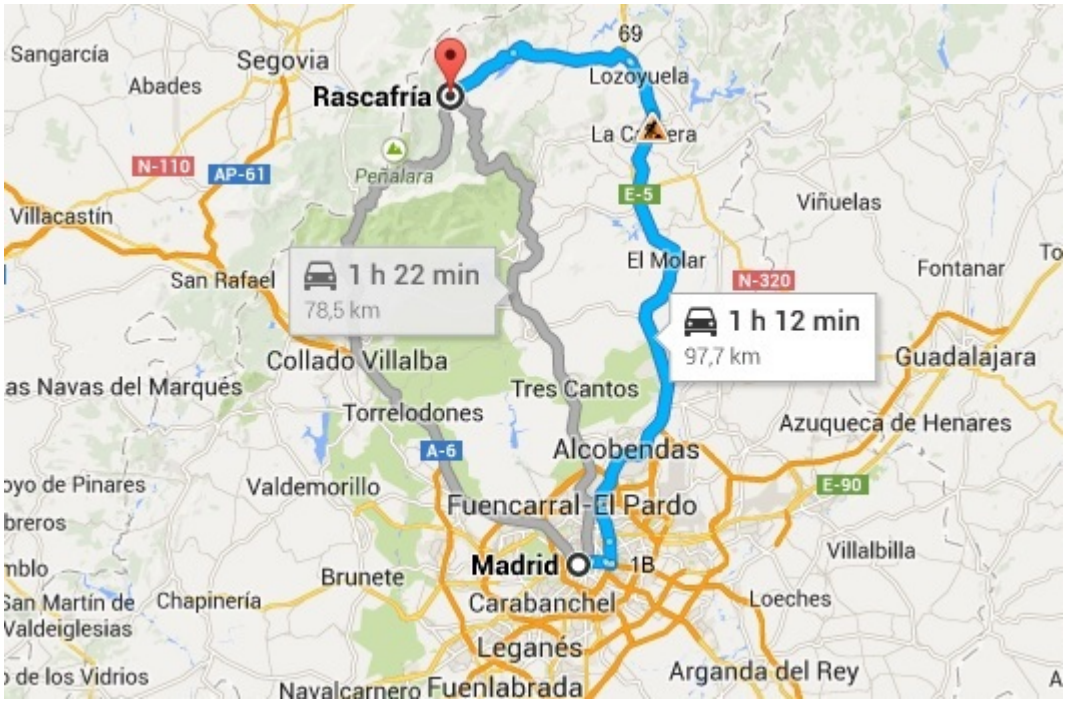
In this northern town, there are plenty of adventure activities to do. Although hiking and biking are the most popular, you can also jump into one of Madrid’s natural ponds. After that, enjoy the rest of the day at one of the pool-side *terrazas* or at a café in the quaint town.

How to get there:

- **By Car (How to get there)**
- **By bus**

Depart from: Plaza Castilla. 194 bus
Schedule:
Departure (Madrid – Rascafria (Bus))
Return (Rascafria – Madrid (Bus))
Duration: approx. **2 hour**
Price: 5,10€ (round trip 10,20€)

Where to find it on a map:



Best Natural Swimming Pools

in Madrid (my top three)

Sometimes in life, you find yourself taking sides on what really matters: dogs or cats? living in the city or in a town? Here comes a difficult one: pizza or burger? From now on, you won't have to struggle on the next question in Madrid: **day trip to the ocean or hiking in the mountains?** Cause the answer is **piscina natural**!!

Las piscinas naturales, or **natural swimming pools/ponds,** are a pleasant alternative to the more common ones in the city (take a look at our previous post, **my top 4 city swimming pools in Madrid**). As far as I know, this kind of pool is **chemical free** and uses the water that flows from a river to fill the **pool**. Here in Madrid, we are lucky enough to live relatively close to a few of them. Since **summer** has now come and it's going to stick around for a while, go give yourself a break and enjoy life in the ***"Sierra de Madrid".***

Here are my top three!

(note—they're all open now but I highly recommend calling beforehand to confirm their hours, sometimes they change without warning)

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1. Piscinas naturales de Cercedilla (Las Dehesas)



Cercedilla by Marcelo Concina



Cercedilla by ABC

What you need to know:

Cercedilla's pool is my favorite because it's the closest to the city and the easiest one to get to. Before going, you should know that there is a "small" 30-60min walk from **Cercedilla's train station** to the pool. Although you can get a bus that makes it shorter, I'd recommend walking and enjoying the **landscape**. Also, that way you'll really feel you deserve the swim.

Telephone: 91 852 57 40 / 91 852 22 00 (Tourism office)

Schedule: **10am to 8pm** (Season 2014: They are open since June 13th!!)

How to get there:

- Quick link to **how to get to Cercedilla**
- **Bus** from *Cercanias* train station to the pools

How much is it?

- **Working days:** 5,50€
- **Weekends**: 6,50€
- **Others**: Children and elderly 3,50€ / They also have group prices.

**Note: If it's the first time you go there, ask somebody to tell you in which direction you have to walk.*

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2. Piscinas naturales Buitrago de Lozoya

(Riosequillo)



Buitrago de Lozoya by Kripsol



Buitrago de Lozoya by Canalgestión

What you need to know:

My perfect day trip would be visiting **Buitrago de Lozoya** town in the morning, follow by spending the afternoon at the pool while enjoying the view. Buitrago's pool is a bit farther than the one in Cercedilla, and the public transportation is not as convenient. However, the town and the pool deserve a try.

Telephone: 91 293 20 47 (Info) / 91 868 00 56 (City hall) / 91 545 10 00 (Canal de Isabel II)

Schedule: 10am to 8pm (Season 2014: They are open since June 21st!!)

- **Working days(From Thuesday to Friday):** 11.30 am to 8.30pm
- **Weekends and holidays:** 11am to 9pm

- **Note: Mondays are closed. Better to go on a weekday.*

How to get there:

- Quick link to **how to get to Buitrago**
- **Note. Ask the bus driver where to get off, it's not the last stop and you don't want to get lost!*

How much is it?

- **Working days:** 2,50€
- **Weekends**: 3€
- **Others**: Children and elderly 1,50€

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3. Piscinas naturales Rascafría (Las Presillas)



Rascafria by rascafria.eu



rascafria by javidemadrid.tumblr.com

What you need to know:

Last but not least, *Las Presillas* pool in Rascafria is the farthest pond from Madrid and the less convenient to go by public transportation. Although the entrance is free and looks like the most natural and authentic. Plus, the bar area is great!

Telephone: 91 869 18 04 (Las Presillas) / 91 869 11 71 (Rascafria City hall)

Schedule: 9am to 9pm

How to get there:

- Quick link **to how to get to Rascafría**

How much is it?

- **The entrance is free!!**
- **Parking is 5€ a day.**

Buitrago de Lozoya



Buitrago_del_Lozoya by wikipedia



Buitrago de Lozoya by Lugaresconhistoria

What to see:

After living in **Madrid** for a while, you learn how to survive the summer heat (**pools help a lot**) and **Buitrago de Lozoya** has become an integral part of my method to avoiding the high temperatures. An hour and a half away from the city, you will find this beautiful city surrounded by a **wall** that was built during the **IX and XI centuries**. Here, enjoy the breeze from the **Lozoya River** and the views of the **Somosierra** mountains. Find your spot in the plaza while drinking a beer and looking up at **Buitrago de Lozoya's Castle.**

A little secret of the town will be revealed soon… so keep an eye on the blog!

How to get there:

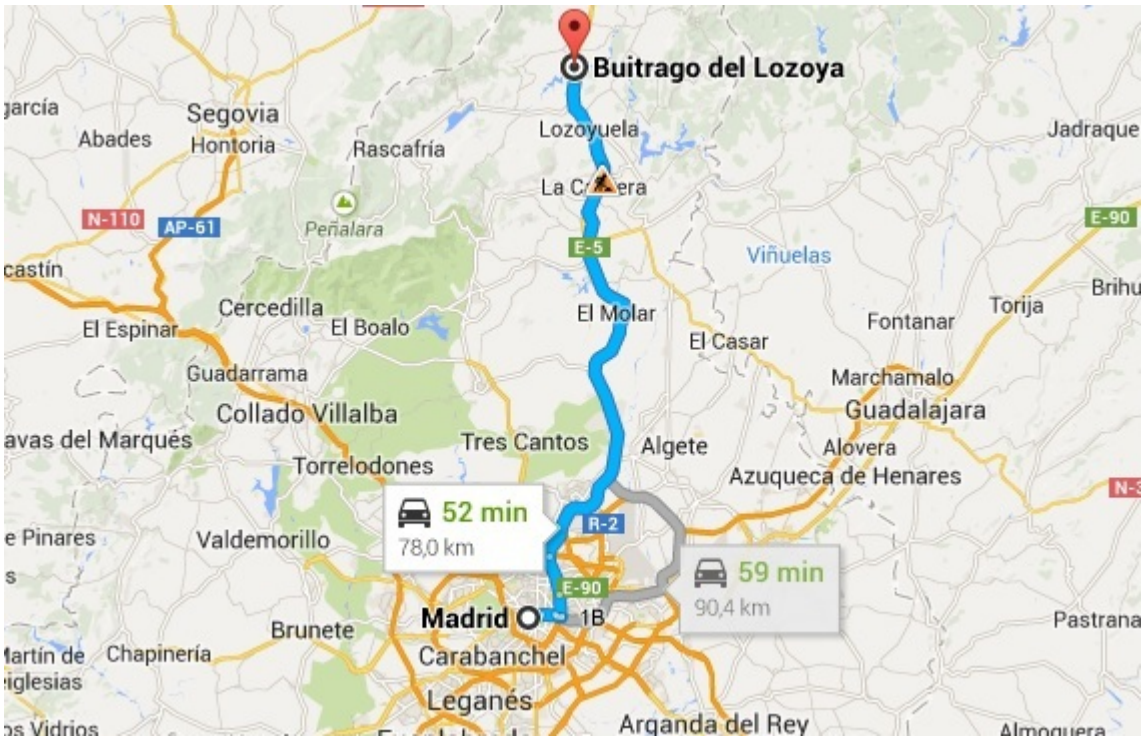
- **By Car (How to get there by Car)**

Duration: 1 hour (80km)

- **By bus**

Depart from: Plaza Castilla
Schedule:
Departure (Madrid – Buitrago de lozoya (Bus))
Return (Buitrago de lozoya – Madrid (Bus))
Duration: approx. 1 hour 40 min
Price: 5,10€ (round trip 10,20€)

Where to find it on a map:



My top 4 city swimming pools in Madrid!

Some of these swimming pools only open in Summer—if you're looking to take a dip in Autumn, Winter or Spring, check out "Madrid's top pools open year-round and much more".

One of my very best memories as a child is **swimming** in **Madrid's summer pools**. Growing up in the city, we used to go to one of the pools close to my home near Retiro almost every day in summer. There, we would spend the day swimming, running and eating at the ***cafetería***. A few years later, the story repeated itself but this time with my friends. We got together and talked and enjoyed the **summer heat and calmness** as if there was no tomorrow.

I'm writing this article today because summer is here, the pools are open and I want to relax and enjoy my day off. On **this list**, you'll read about **4 public swimming pools in the centre of Madrid** that you will most certainly find me in this summer. To be honest, I'm not really sure they are the **best of the city**, but I can guarantee you that all of them will make you forget that **Madrid** doesn't have the sea…

at the end of this post you'll find a link to all of Madrid's municipal pools, prices and info. And if you're looking for natural swimming pools outside the city, check out our post on "Madrid's Best Natural Swimming Pools**" which are located in nearby mountain towns.*



Summer pool by UCM

1. Complutense University of Madrid (La complu!)

Awesome student atmosphere and CHEAP bar food!!! It’s a party.

Schedule: 11h to 20h (11am to 8pm)

What you need to know:

- **Address:** Avenida Obispo Trejo, s/n – 28040 Madrid (Map)
- **Neighbourhood:** Ciudad Universitaria/Moncloa
- **Telephone:** 913 941 174

How to get there:

- **Metro**: Ciudad Universitaria
- **Bus**: 46

How much is it?

- **Complutense members**: 4,50€
- **University students** (Different than Complutense): 6,50€
- **Plus ones**: 8€

*Note: You or someone you are with must bring a student ID to get in. If you are a Complutense student you also get a discount.



Casa de Campo by ABC

2. Centro Deportivo Municipal Casa de Campo

One of Madrid's most popular public pools by far. There is a fun ambience here but you'll have to wait on a line. It gets crowded.

Schedule: 11h to 21h

What you need to know:

- **Address:** Paseo Puerta del Angel, 7 28011 MADRID (Map)
- **Neighborhood:** Casa de Campo/Moncloa-Aravaca
- **Telephone:** 914 630 050 / 914 649 889

How to get there:

- **Metro**: El Lago, Puerta del Ángel
- **Bus**: 31, 33, 36, 39, 65, 138

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3. Centro Deportivo Municipal Francos Rodríguez

Great quality swimming pool and plenty of grass area to lay down on, situated in a residential neighbourhood yet close to the University, so you'll find a mix of both families and younger people.

Schedule: 11h – 21h

What you need to know:

- **Dirección:** Calle Numancia, 11 (Map)
- **Neighborhood:** Ciudad Universitaria/ Moncloa-Aravaca
- **Teléfono:** 914 599 871

How to get there:

- **Metro**: Francos Rodríguez
- **Bus:** 44, 64, 126, 127, 128, 132



Peñuelas by Rosalia Martinez

4. Centro Deportivo Municipal Peñuelas

Lay out on the sun, take a dip and grab a picnic table with your friends for lunch!

Schedule: 11h – 21h

What you need to know:

- **Dirección:** Calle Arganda, 25 (Map)
- **Neighborhood:** Acacias/Arganzuela
- **Telephone:** 914 732 491

How to get there:

- **Metro:** Acacias, Embajadores, Pirámides
- **Bus:** 18, 36, 62
- **Renfe (Cercanias):** Pirámides

What do I need to bring?

- There are showers so bring flip flops
- Although some have lockers, most people just leave their stuff on their towels and don't bring anything valuable
- Bring snacks or a few euros to get a bite or dink at the cafeteria
- Lots of suntan lotion, you don't want to be that foreigner who gets burnt….

How much is it?

- **Single tickets:** Adults week-day 5€ (weekends 6€)
- **10 ticket pack:** 42,95€
- **Summer-long ticket** 126,15€

*Except Complutense. See *above*.

Full list of public summer swimming pools in Madrid: **Listado completo de piscinas municipales**

Check out **Madrid's Best Natural Swimming Pools**!

Aranjuez



What to see:

In the south of Madrid, you'll feel royal as you walk through Aranjuez's lush gardens and visit its impressive Royal Palace. Built as the royal family's summer house, Aranjuez is best to visit in the spring or summertime so you can take in all the colors of its gardens in full bloom.

Unlike most towns in Spain, there are no tiny streets here. Aranjuez stands out for its large and spacious boulevards. Once you've built up an appetite, there are plenty of good Spanish restaurants right along the Tajo river where you can enjoy typical Spanish food and *carne de caza* (game food).

How to get there:

- ## By train (Cercanias)

Depart from: Atocha train station
Schedule:
Departure (Madrid – Aranjuez (RENFE))
Return (Aranjuez – Madrid (RENFE))
Duration: approx. 50 min
Price: 3,30€ (round trip approx. 6,60€).

- ## By bus

Depart from: Méndez Álvaro: Bus 423
Schedule:
Departure (Madrid – Aranjuez (INTERURBANO))
Return (Aranjuez – Madrid (INTERURBANO))
Duration: approx. 1 hour
Price: 4,20€ (round trip 8,40€)

Where to find it on a map:



Images from turismoenaranjuez.com and wikipedia

Ávila



What to see:

There are plenty of reasons to go to Ávila. For example, the city is stunning (especially when it snows in winter), the cathedral transports you to ancient times and the old wall that still stands enclosing the city is simply amazing.

It also claims to be the Spanish city with the most amount of Romanesque and Gothic churches per capita. Plus it's the birthplace of Spain's national saint, Santa Teresa de Ávila.

But to be honest, I would go here for the following: **judías del barco** (beans from Avila), **chuletón de ternera** (large beef steak) and ***yemas* de Santa Teresa** (traditional sweets made with egg yolks).

How to get there:

- **By train (Renfe)**

Depart from: Chamartín train station
Schedule:

Departure (Madrid – Ávila (RENFE))
Return (Ávila – Madrid (RENFE))
Duration: approx. 1 hour 20 min
Price: 12€ (round trip approx. 24€).

- ### By bus

Depart from: Estación Sur. Méndez Álvaro
Schedule:
Departure (Madrid – Avila (Larrea))
Return (Avila – Madrid (Larrea))
Duration: approx. 1 hour 20 min
Price: 8,90€ (fares + round trip ticket approx. 20€)

Where to find it on a map:

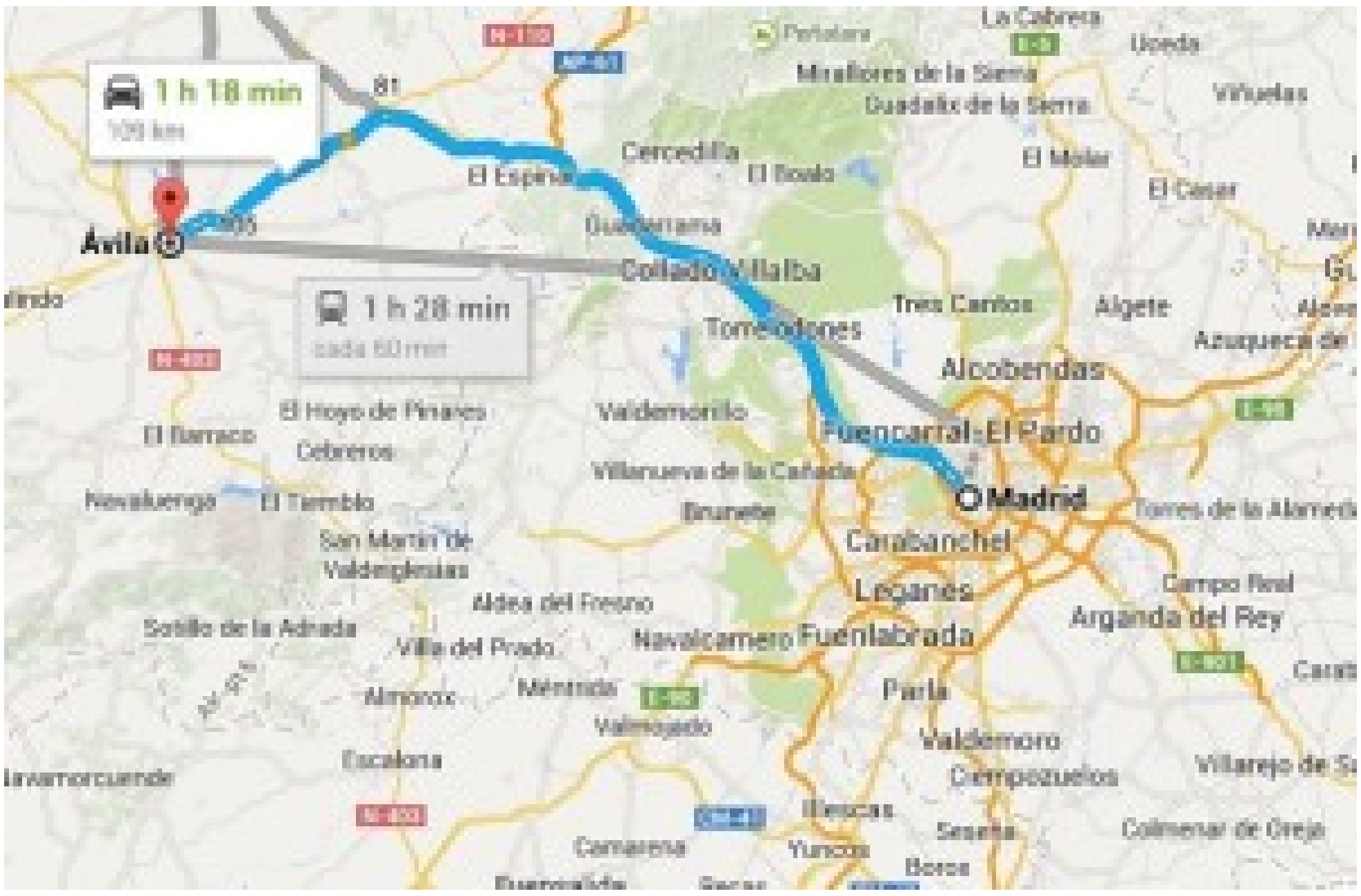


Image from Hostal Alcantara and abc.es