Best Gifts from Madrid

Buying gifts for friends and family in Madrid can be a difficult task. Pretty much everything can be found everywhere nowadays. I often see the same Spanish brand names and products when I walk around my neighborhood in New York. So I think to myself, why did I even bother lugging that bottle of *Marqués de Riscal* all across the ocean? If you find yourself faced with this same problem (and not inclined to buy your mom a keychain or a magnet), here's a list of well thought-out **gift ideas from Madrid**. Hope it helps!

First let's quickly name some of the **more obvious gift ideas**, which are also good but run the risk of being found in your hometown (scroll down if you're all too familiar with these):

Handheld fans, flamenco shawls, ceramic tiles and **dishes, paella pans, recipe books, aprons** with a flamenco dancer or the flag of Spain, **football/soccer** jersey, **wine**, **cured ham** and **sweets** with long shelf-lives such as ***mazapán***, ***turron*** and ***polvorones*** (can be bought at **El Riojano** or **Casa Mira**, two very traditional pastry shops in the city center) or a **swiss army/pocket knife** (best from Toledo but also sold in Plaza Mayor). While it's always best to buy these items from independent sellers (which you will find below), if you're pressed for time you can find absolutely everything at **El Corte Inglés**, the country's major department store with locations all around.

Now let's move on to the **more original gift ideas**:

1. Anything from La Violeta

La Violeta is a candy shop located in the center of Madrid. It must be included in this list because it is a typical place **where Madrileños buy gifts for other Madrileños. *Las violetas*** are purple-colored sucking candies wrapped in pretty little boxes and ribbon. You can buy them plain or ***escarchadas***, meaning sugar-coated. You can also find ***cajas de bombones*** (boxes of chocolates) and many other sweet treats. Prices range from **€5** to **€15**.

> ***Web***
> ***Address:*** *Plaza de Canalejas, 6*
> ***Metro:*** *Sol and Sevilla*

2. Saffron or a pack of mixed Spanish spices for anyone who likes to cook

My sister, Amanda, actually gave me this idea. Her boyfriend's family is originally from the Basque Country. Her father-in-law loves little trinkets from Spain and also makes **paella** every year for the whole family. So she had the bright idea of buying him a pack of ***azafrán*** (saffron). **Yes, saffron!** It costs

peanuts in comparison to what it costs in the States. She bought it at **Corte Inglés** and he was over the moon when he received it. For non-purists, you can also buy **sachets**, which is a bag of mixed Spanish spices, also used **for making paella**. Anyone who likes to cook will enjoy this gift!

3. Berets; can be bought at a charming century-old hat shop right in Plaza Mayor

Founded in 1894, Madrid's oldest hat shop—**La Favorita C.B.**—is now in the hands of its family's fourth generation. It remains in its original location in Plaza Mayor and sells all types of traditional Spanish hats that make for fun and useful gifts. Amanda gave me this idea too. She bought a **black beret** for her stylish sister-in-law which cost **€19**. Although the black beret is traditionally worn in the Basque Country, where it's called

a ***Boina***, it very well looked like it could have been bought at Top Shop. I'm sure anyone could rock this look in any city around the world, and they'd have a nice story to tell when someone asked them where they bought it.

Facebook
Web
Address: *Plaza Mayor, 25*
Metro: *Sol or Opera*

4. Chocolate for dipping churros; can be bought at the famous Chocolatería San Gines (near Sol)

In Spanish, this is simply called ***chocolate a la taza*** *or* ***chocolate caliente****.* However, for English-speakers this can be quite confusing—this is not just hot chocolate. It refers to the thick chocolate that you **dip churros** into. When my husband's relatives from California were visiting, they bought bags and bags of this chocolate as a present for all their friends back home. It was a hit! And it's not exclusive for dipping *churros*, you can also use it for dipping

strawberries, bananas—anything you like! You can buy it in bags by the kilo at Madrid's most famous churros shop, **Chocolatería San Ginés**, open 24/7 and just a stone's throw from **Sol**.

Facebook
Web
Address: *Pasadizo de San Gines, 5*
Metro: *Sol*

5. Peseta; for millions of small gift ideas made in Madrid, using fabrics from around the world (in Malasaña)

Named after Spain's former currency—***las pesetas***—this charming store was founded by Laura Martínez del Pozo around ten years ago. She collects fabrics from all over the world and uses them to make unique, creative and very handy items, from **tablet** and **laptop cases** to **handbags** and **wallets**. They even sell beautiful shoes, also typical from Spain—**espadrilles** and ***alpargatas***—though with a nice twist as the fabric is a hundred

percent unique. Seeing as these everyday items are useful for everyone, you're sure to find great gifts here.

You can also find Peseta's products sold at an awesome book store and cafe near Callao called **La Central**, which will talk more about below.

Facebook
Web
Address: *c/ Noviciado, 9*
Metro: *Noviciado*

6. Summer shoes; can be found in stores everywhere (also in Peseta)

alpargatas at the top and mallorquinas at the bottom

Esparto (espadrilles), ***alpargatas*** and ***mallorquinas*** are the **three most popular summer shoe styles** originating from Spain. All can be found in any colour and in any standard shoe store (the center is littered with typical shoe stores, especially around **Plaza Mayor** and **Calle Carmen** which is right off of Sol). The latter two styles are unisex, so you're bound to find something for both your male and female friends and family. Since Spain is well-known for its amazing shoes, why not wow them with some Spanish summer footwear they can strut around their own city in style? Plus you don't have to limit yourself to the traditional ones. You can find snazzier versions too. You can also check out our post on "**3 Places to Find Espadrilles in Madrid**" for more recommendations.

This photo is from a new store called **Alpargatus** which is located just off of Plaza Mayor on Calle Postas. They have all types of *alpargatas*, espadrilles and *mallorquinas*, plus other souvenirs. It's really convenient.

> ***Facebook***
> ***Address:*** *C/ Postas, 20 (just a few steps away from Plaza Mayor)*
> ***Metro:*** *Sol or Opera*
>
> Or check out another post of ours dedicated solely to espadrilles: "**3 Places to Find Espadrilles in Madrid**"

8. Traditional gloves with silk lining from 100-year-old glove shop in Sol

Just a note—I couldn't get a photo because the owner closed the shop for the whole weekend to go to Lisbon and watch the football match…

Believe it or not, Spain still has entire shops dedicated solely to **gloves**! One of Madrid's most well-known and oldest glove shops is called **Guantes Luque**, nestled between the streets of Sol and Sevilla. Entering the shop is an experience in and of itself. These elegant gloves take you back to

another era, when items were not mass produced and were meant to last a lifetime. Understandably on the **expensive** side, these traditional **Spanish gloves** are not only beautiful, but have silk lining which is a godsend in winter.

No web, but they're on Yelp
Address: *c/ Espoz y Mina, 3*
Metro: *Sol, Gran Vía or Sevilla*

7. Gift Basket – 3 simple and delicious ingredients

image from gastronosfera.com

When I asked around for good gift ideas, one expat said that he always brings home a basket of 3 items: ***pimientos de piquillo*** (roasted red peppers), ***aceitunas campo reales*** (olives) and a really fancy ***aceite de oliva*** (olive oil). After speaking with many foreigners living in Spain, it became clear that **campo real olives** are a major hit among the gift-giving crowd. Though if you don't like olives, you can always replace them with a bottle of wine (my favorite red is **Ribera** and my favorite white is **Albariño**), a box of **marzipan** from Toledo or

sweets from **La Violeta** (mentioned #1).

Where to buy: while you can buy these items all over the city and of course at **El Corte Inglés,** we recommend you go to **Mercado de Antón Martín** **or** **Mercado de San Fernando**. These markets are very traditional, unlike many of the others that have become over-priced and over-touristy. You can also go to Qué Rico Tó, mentioned #2 on this list.

Mercado de Antón Martín

Facebook
Address: *C/ Santa Isabel, 5*
Metro: *Antón Martín*

Mercado de San Fernando

Facebook
Address*: C/ Embajadores, 41*
Metro: *Lavapiés or Embajadaroes*

8. Spanish Comic Books

For your alternative or comic-book loving friends, a **Spanish comic** could be a really cool gift. It's always fun to read comics in other languages, especially because the drawings and images help you figure out the story. But of course this gift isn't for everyone. The above photo is of **El Coleccionista**, a well-known **comic shop in Lavapiés** with a wide collection. My sister, Amanda (also in the photo), bought a few rare books for her friends here. When I asked Amanda if I could include her photo in this article, she said of course—she'd be happy to support any type of independent shop like this one which make up the backbone of a city's personality and charm. I've also just found out that one of the world's best comic stores is located in Madrid too, it's called **Akira Comics** and is located a bit further out in the city.

El Coleccionista
Address: *C/ Tribulete, 5*

Metro: *Lavapiés*

9. Second-hand books with personality from Desperate Literature

At **Desperate Literature**, a new international bookstore located in the center of Madrid (close to the Royal Palace), you can find good quality used books in English, Spanish and French, many of which are related to Spain and can make for a great, personalized gift. Also, this bookstore has a nice story behind it, as its three young owners—Michael, Corey and Craig—have opened used international bookstores in Santorini,

Greece and in Brooklyn, New York. With the recent opening of Desperate Literature in Madrid, they aim to provide a literary haven for travellers, expats and Madrileños alike. **Here's a long article on Desperate Literature**.

Web
Facebook
Address: *c/ Campomanes, 13*
Metro*: Santo Domingo and Opera*

10. New books and much more from a La Central, an ultra hip bookstore/cafe near Callao

While my first suggestion would be to go to Desperate Literature, if you're looking for all kinds of **new books in**

Spanish (i.e. children's, novels, poetry, you name it) or other gift ideas such as **board games, notebooks and fun nicknacks**, then this is the store you should be going to.

Facebook
Web
Address: *Postigo de San Martín 8*
Metro: *Callao*

11. Trinkets from a Funky Madrid Gift Shop called Curiosite

As far as gift shops go, this one is quite original. At **Curiosite**, you can get maps of Malasaña and Chueca for €12, which look great framed, as well as tons of other fun little *tchotchkes*. This gift is recommended for someone who has lived or spent a good amount of time in Madrid.

Facebook
Web
Address: *c/ Corredera Alta de San Pablo, 28*
Metro: *Tribunal*

Any other gift ideas? Please share! We'll be happy to add more to this list