



MADRID TRAVEL GUIDE

GETTING AROUND MADRID

Tourist Travel Pass

Get around the city easily, quickly and economically with our tourist travel card which gives unlimited use of all public transport.

Airport Express Shuttle

The airport express service links Barajas with the city centre in 40 minutes for five euros. It runs 24 hours a day and accepts card payment.

Getting around Madrid by Metro

With over 300 stations linked together by 15 lines, Madrid's underground will get you around the city quickly and hassle-free.

Getting around Madrid by Taxi

If you're in a bit of a hurry or just feel it's too cold to walk, the city has thousands of taxis waiting to take you wherever you want to go.

Getting around Madrid by Bus

Madrid runs an efficient bus service that allows you to take in the city sights as you travel to your destination.

Getting around Madrid by Train

The Cercanías suburban train system connects Madrid with other towns and villages in the region, including El Escorial and Aranjuez.

Bike Rental in Madrid

Explore the city in a healthy, sustainable way. Through the Madrid 360 initiative, the city reaffirms its commitment to sustainability and improving environmental protection.

Driving in Madrid

Find out about the basic regulation to get around by car in our city. It is compulsory to display the environmental sticker!

WHAT TO DO IN MADRID

Madrid through the seasons

No matter what time of year you visit, in Madrid you will enjoy our light and an inexhaustible array of culture, food and entertainment.



Art and Culture

Madrid is a major cultural capital in Europe. Explore the places and characters that raised the city to the top of the art and culture scene.

Food and Drink

Delve into Madrid's exciting food scene and treat yourself to a dinner at a Michelin-star restaurant, grab a drink and some tapas in a century-old taberna or enjoy a bite to eat and a cocktail in a rooftop bar with fabulous views.

Shopping

Art, fashion, luxury goods, antiques, music, technology gadgets... There's nothing you can't buy in Madrid.

Nightlife

Unwind over a drink, dance till the small hours, spend an evening at the theatre or go on a tapas crawl... Madrid boasts an unparalleled nightlife scene.

Day Trips

Hop onto a train or bus and leave the hustle and bustle of the city behind.

Amusement Parks and Zoos

Enjoy your visit to Madrid with the whole family. Here's a selection of great places that will undoubtedly put a smile on the little ones' faces.

Parks and Gardens

Madrid boasts an array of public parks and gardens from Casa de Campo, Spain's largest green space, to El Retiro Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Flamenco

Discover the best spots in the city to enjoy Spain's artistic expression par excellence.

Madrid for Kids

Madrid has lots of activities for children. Check out our suggestions to make the most of your great family holiday.

MAPS AND GUIDES

Some guidelines to help you fully enjoy your stay and make sure that nothing catches you off guard.

[City Map of Madrid \(PDF\)](#)

Don't leave your hotel without this city map featuring Madrid's most famous landmarks (PDF, 5MB)

[Madrid Metro Map \(PDF\)](#)

Download the map to one of the most modern underground transport networks in the world (PDF, 1.4 MB)



[City Bus Routes Tourist Map \(PDF\)](#)

An informational map to help you discover the city using its public bus system (PDF, 2.4MB)
Practical information

MONEY IN MADRID

Tax-free (VAT Refund)

If you have permanent residence in a non-EU country, and your purchases meet certain conditions, you can reclaim VAT (IVA in Spanish) on items bought during your stay in Spain (mainland and the Balearic Islands).

Conditions:

- Items must be purchased from stores that offer digital DIVA tax free forms (mandatory since January 2019)
- Items must be purchased for personal use, in other words, not for the purpose of sale.
- You must return to your country of residence with the purchased goods within three months of buying them.

You must get your Tax-Free Forms validated at your final point of departure from the EU. If Spain is your last exit point, this is done at the electronic DIVA machines (generally located close to customs offices at airports, seaports and land borders) by scanning the barcode on your form. [Click here](#) to find out more about how to validate your Tax-Free Form.

Please note: All UK residents, just like residents from other non-EU countries, must validate their forms in their final point of departure from the EU. You are not allowed to validate them upon arrival in the UK.

Once you have successfully validated your form at Adolfo Suarez Madrid Barajas Airport, you can obtain your refund from the Tax Free offices in the boarding areas. It is also worth noting that there are shops in the city, such as El Corte Inglés department store chain, which have offices where you can get VAT refunds on items purchased in that store.

In addition, the international tax refund operator Global Blue has opened its first VIP Free Shopping establishment in Madrid, in Calle de Claudio Coello. Led by a multilingual team, they offer an exclusive service that allows tourists from non-EU countries to get VAT refunds without having to wait until the last day of their trip.

Exchanging Money

During your stay in Madrid, you'll need euros, the official currency for 19 of the 27 EU member countries. The euro has eight-coin denominations: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents, and 1 and 2 euros, while bank notes come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 euros.

You'll find several currency exchange offices at Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport; Atocha and Madrid - Chamartín - Clara Campoamor train stations; and the main bus stations – Avenida de América, Méndez Álvaro and Moncloa. There are also a number of bureaux de



change in central Madrid, especially in Puerta del Sol. Most banks and many hotels also offer their own currency exchange services.

Credit Cards and ATMs

Most establishments accept credit and debit cards (although a few may set a minimum amount for card payments). You can use your card to buy metro tickets and to pay for bus and taxi rides. If you need to take cash out, you will find ATMs all around the city. As a result of the pandemic caused by COVID-19, many establishments that did not previously offer the option of paying by credit card have adapted their payment methods to accept this system to comply with health measures.

Visa and MasterCard are the most widely accepted cards (American Express and Diners are much less common). You should contact your bank if you wish to find out what commission they'll charge you for using your card in Spain.

Tipping Etiquette

In Madrid, tipping is entirely optional. Some restaurants may add a 2- or 3-euro charge onto the bill for bread or a small tapa, a service which they are obliged to warn you about and which you are entitled to turn down.

Since it's not customary to tip, it's up to you to whether you leave a little extra as a thank you for the service received.

The same rule applies in hotels, taxis, beauty and hair salons, and other one-on-one services. In hotels, bars and restaurants you will sometimes come across the phrase 'IVA NO INCLUIDO' (VAT NOT INCLUDED). This means that they will add-on an extra 10% to the bill.

VISAS

Spain is a signatory of the Schengen Agreement, so visitors from any of the Schengen member states enjoy free movement and there is no border control. If this is not your case, just apply for a tourist visa at the Spanish Embassy in your country of residence.

Passport

In addition to the Schengen Agreement, which applies to residents of Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Sweden and Switzerland, there are also other agreements with certain countries which simplify entry into Spain, for which it is necessary to obtain a visa, whereby the presentation of a valid passport is enough. *Note: The last enlargement of the Schengen Area was on 19 December 2011, when Liechtenstein joined. You can find the requirements to travel to Spain on the following Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation link.



Visa

In general, the requirements to obtain a visa include proof of sufficient financial means for your trip, proof of return flights and a reservation for accommodation, but the procedure may vary from one nation to another, so full details can be obtained from the corresponding Spanish Embassy, which you can find on the website of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

If the purpose of your trip is merely for tourism, you should apply for a short-stay visa (Schengen). This visa enables you to travel or stay in Spain and in the rest of the Schengen states for a period of no more than three months (90 days) in a period of six months (180 days) from the first entry date in the Schengen Area.

If your visit to Spain is for other purposes, you should apply for a long-stay national visa. This visa allows you to live, live and work, study or carry out research work in Spain. All foreigners who wish to enter Spain to live, live and work or study need to have this type of visa, unless they are citizens of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland.

CLIMATE

Madrid will surprise you with its intense, enveloping blue sky. With a dry climate and little rainfall, the city has hot summers and cold winters. No matter what time of the year you choose to come, you're very likely to see with your own eyes the deep blue-sky Velázquez loved to paint. [Weather forecast by locations-Madrid](#)

Spring

- In spring, Madrid's parks, gardens and green spaces are bursting with flowers.
- The first couple of months tend to bring rain, with an average temperature of 12°C (54°F) in April. As the month of May progresses, the weather becomes almost summery, with average temperatures reaching 21°C (70°F) in June, when the streets get livelier. The perfect temperature to enjoy the popular Fiestas de San Isidro Labrador, the patron saint of Madrid, which are celebrated around the 15th May or on the 2nd of May bank holiday, known as Día de la Comunidad de Madrid.

Summer

- Summers are dry and can be very hot, with an average temperature of around 25°C in July and August, but don't be put off, you can look for relief in the many swimming pools in the centre and surrounding areas. During these months, the days are very long and the city's activity takes place at the end of the afternoon and evening, when it moves onto a terrace on the street or on rooftops. In August, the city is more relaxed as many people from Madrid go away on holiday, although there are usually festivities in Cayetano, Lavapiés and La Paloma from 6 to 15 August, some of the best open-air festivities in the city. In late August and in September, the temperatures drop significantly.



Autumn

- In October, temperatures are mild, while in November, it tends to be cold and rainy. The last two months of the year are generally the wettest. The average temperature goes from 15 °C in October to 7°C in December. In any case, it is an excellent opportunity to visit the city's parks, including El Retiro - in shades of red and ochre. Furthermore, autumn is the time when you feel like tasting some of the local cuisine typical dishes, such as stew or tripe; La Bola is a good option in this respect. During the autumn months, it is common to come across a weather condition, popularly known as the "Veranillo de San Miguel", which is celebrated on 29 September, from which it takes its name, usually coinciding in mid-November. It is a phenomenon that brings typical summer temperatures and sunny days, making the onset of the cold weather more bearable.

Winter

- Winters in Madrid are cold and dry, and snow does fall now and then, especially in late December and in January. However, Madrid isn't known to be a particularly snowy city. January is the coldest month of the year, when average temperatures can be as low as 6°C (43°F) on average.
- Nevertheless, cloudless skies are very common in the winter months, so you won't miss out on the warm and pleasant midday sun. In this period of the year, at the end of February, it is a must to admire the beautiful cherry trees in blossom at the Quinta de los Molinos. And of course, you must enjoy Christmas, with its lights, the San Silvestre Vallecana, grapes in the Puerta del Sol or the Kings' Parade, among many other activities. When the chill begins to bite, it's a great idea to drop into one of the many 'chocolaterias' dotted around Madrid and enjoy a lovely cup of hot chocolate with churros (long deep-fried doughnuts).

EMERGENCY SERVICES

When travelling, it's always advisable to know where to turn to for medical or police assistance if the need arises. Read below to find practical information on what to do in an emergency.

Healthcare

- The Spanish National Health System comprises a widespread network of hospitals and healthcare centres that spans across the country. Healthcare centres provide primary care, while specialist service is available in hospitals, to which patients must be referred by a doctor. In addition, hospitals and some healthcare centres have an emergency service.
- The entire list of healthcare centres in the Region of Madrid can be found [here](#).
- If you're an EU citizen, you and your family are eligible for medical care, so that you don't have to return to your country of origin for treatment. However, you should get the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) in your country, or any equivalent document proving that you have medical insurance in a member state, since this will entitle you to prompt medical care wherever you are.
- If you don't have this card (or an equivalent document), you'll still get immediate medical assistance, though you may be fully charged for it. You may claim a refund from your health



insurance company, according to the medical costs applicable in the country where you received treatment.

Medicines

- Medicines in Spain must be bought at pharmacies, which you'll easily spot by their green cross. Regardless of the time and the area where you are, you'll always find one on duty, open round the clock. Antibiotics are sold on prescription only.

Emergencies

- In case of emergency (ambulance, fire and rescue, police), call 112, a toll-free number that works 24/7 across the EU, Spain included. The 112-call centre immediately identifies the caller's location. It has interpreting services covering as many as 80 languages.
- Emergency Tourist Assistance Service
- The Emergency Tourist Assistance Service (SATE) offers personal assistance to tourists who need to visit a police station for whatever reason.
- Assistance is provided by a qualified team at the official tourism agency or by police officers. They help tourists lodge complaints or fill in forms.
- Most countries have diplomatic representation in Madrid.
- Check out the list of embassies in the city.

COVID INFORMAITON

On Tuesday July 4, 2023, the Spanish government declared an end to the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and announced that people no longer have to wear masks in health care centres, hospitals and chemists.

Travelling to Spain

As of Tuesday 20 September 2022, the Spain Travel Health (SpTH) portal, both the website and the mobile applications, will no longer be operational. It will NO LONGER be necessary to fill in the health control form to travel to Spain NOR to present the SpTH QR code when boarding the plane or on arrival at the airport.

REMEMBER: It is recommended not to travel if you have symptoms compatible with COVID-19 (fever, breathing difficulty, cough...). Stay at home/accommodation until these symptoms improve or disappear.

Disclaimer: Please be aware that this is an uncertain and evolving situation, and further restrictions could be introduced at short notice. Although we make every effort to keep it up to date, we cannot assume any responsibility for the completeness and accuracy of this information. Anyone intending to travel to Spain is advised to confirm the conditions and restrictions that are in place with their tour operator, airline and accommodation provider before travel.