



**Essential Madrid Guide: "Madrid about you"**

<http://www.turismomadrid.es/en/>



## History

The open nature of the people, the different languages you can hear on the streets, the life full of energy and happiness 24 hours per day. These things don't appear overnight. These things appear after years of History.

## Origin

Its **History** starts before to be called like this, in the **Prehistory**. The sites founded in **Ciempozuelos** or near the **Manzanares River** are witnesses of this period of time. And, then, we arrive to the traces left by the **Roman Empire** in Madrid, specifically, in **Complutum** (the remote origin of [Alcalá de Henares](#)). Here and in the municipalities of **Titulcia** and **Cadalso de los Vidrios** we can find this kind of traces.

What about the **Middle Ages**? As the Romans, the Visigoths focused their activity in **Alcalá de Henares**. Why not in Madrid? The reason is that the city of Madrid was born with the Muslim invasion of the Iberian Peninsula.

It is difficult to speak about Madrid before the arrival of Muslims. In **865**, when **Muhammad I**, son of Abderraman II, ordered to fortify the small village of Madrid. The city had to change its name, Madrid, for Magerit.



## INTERNATIONAL CRUISE summit

After waiting more than 200 years, in 1083, the king Alfonso VI, known as "The Brave", conquered the small village, helped by a teenager who climbed the city walls. This boy was nicknamed Gato and this is the reason why the people from Madrid are known as Gatos.

In the year 1202 the first Code of Laws was given to Madrid by which the city's municipal life was regulated. In the year 1309, the king Fernando IV opened the Court in Madrid for the first time with the attendance of his sons, the Archbishop of Toledo, the nobility and the members of the councils of the different cities.

From that year on, Madrid was the meeting point of the Castillian Court on several occasions. Until the reign of Alfonso XI (1312-1350) the city halls did not exist.

The Kings from the different dynasties were attracted by Madrid and they spent long times in the city. In this way, Madrid began to grow.

Pedro I and Enrique III, kings of Castilla, were the firsts to arrive. In the year 1477, the Catholics Kings arrived to Madrid. Some very important works of art remain their reign, such as the bishop's chapel in the church of Saint Andrew, the house of the Lujanes or the house of Cisneros in the Villa Square. During their reign Madrid experienced a great growth. At the end of the 15th century, the city had 3,400 inhabitants

Carlos I chose Madrid for short stays and, in the year 1561, Felipe II established his residence in the city of Madrid. Moreover, on the 13th of September of 1584, Felipe II saw his greatest dream fulfilled: the Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial. At the end of the 16th century, the city had 40,000 inhabitants.

In the year 1606, Madrid became definitively the seat of the Court of the Spanish kings during the reign of Felipe III.

Carlos III, who was the fourth Bourbon king of Spain, was inspired by the Enlightenment spirit, as well as by erudite despotism, with the aim of imposing his great fulfilments. He achieved the cleaning of the city as well as the reform of streets, squares and avenues. Industry, culture and the inhabitants of Madrid were going to the first to benefit from his rule.

In a short time the city saw new street lighting, a sewer system, paving and paper currency, thanks to the St. Carlos Bank. Great urban works and reforms were designed and finished: the Puerta de Alcalá, Prado Street, the Botanic Garden, the Medicine College of St. Charles, the post office and customs buildings, and the Cibeles, Neptuno, Apolo and Artichoke fountains. Also, the Royal Palace was completed as a definite residence for the Spanish kings

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The province of Madrid was born in the 18th century during the reign of the Bourbons in Spain. It was created as an answer to the great incoming population and due to the city becoming the Court of the Habsburgs in the 16th century.

The arrival of the 19th century was synonym of troubles in Madrid where on the 2nd of May of 1808 began the insurrection against Napoleon troops. The Independence War was started. After years of military confrontation, Fernando VII was restored and after his reign, we arrive to Isabel II's reign. In the year 1833 took place the fundamental provincial division and the present provincial limits of the territory of Madrid were established.

The 20th century was, for the history of Spain, one of great conflicts and significant events. The regimes of Primo de Rivera and then of Francisco Franco, following a brief democratic experience and a civil war of fatal consequences in between, became the main characters of a very restless half century in Spanish history. Democracy, political parties, parliamentary regime, monarchy and stability during the last third of the century became the symbols of a modern country that opened its doors to the world.

Madrid and its surrounding Autonomous Region were given a more cosmopolitan air at the the end of the last century, aided by the increasing amount of tourists who visit both all year round. Madrid continues being the open city it has always been, welcoming immigrants from other Spanish regions, and its well-known nightlife has not lost any of its vitality. The modern Madrid grows farther north along Castellana Avenue, and its forgotten old quarters, the city's best artistic patrimony, are constantly restored. At the same time, the Autonomous Region's territories are integrated into this renewing process that both live through day by day.



## Useful Information

Before visit Madrid you should know some useful information to organize your trip as well as possible. Turismo Madrid gives it to you.

## Geographic information

With an area of 8,028 km<sup>2</sup> and surrounded by two other autonomous regions: Castilla y León, in the north-west, and Castilla-La Mancha, in the south-east, we find the Community of Madrid. It is located in the center of the Iberian Peninsula, on the south-eastern tip of Europe.

1981.2 ft (650 meters) above sea level, though there are areas which are over 2133 ft (700 m), the Community of Madrid is surrounded by some physic border: a mountain chain, *Sistema Central*, and a river valley, that of the *Tajo* River.

The most important city of the Community of Madrid is Madrid, the Spanish's capital. The city is on the Manzanares River, a tributary of the Jarama that flows into the Tajo.

## weather

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Due to its location, the Community of Madrid has a continental climate with temperatures that range from 32° F (0° Celsius), or slightly lower in the winter, to up to 104° F (40° C) in the summertime. Yet, the temperatures in the northern mountainous area of the region are much colder than those mentioned above in the winter and milder in the summer.

The average annual temperature is 57.2 ° F (14° C), ranging from 41° F (5° C) in the colder months to 77° F (25° C) in the hotter.

The amount of rain varies, though it is mainly scarce in the large continental area of the region. Therefore, it is not hardly need of an umbrella.

## Opening hours

Madrid is famous for been a city where, always, is something to do. And this is true but, as in anywhere, there are some timetables that you should know. Turismo Madrid shows them to you.

The **Community of Madrid** has wide opening hours. On the one hand, the **shopping centers y las franquicias de moda** open from **10 a.m. to 10 p.m.** (this can change from one establishment to others). On the other hand, the small shops use to open their doors at **10 a.m.** until **2 p.m.** After a break to have lunch, they restart their activity at **5 p.m.** until **8.30 p.m.**

To have lunch in Madrid, you should go to the **restaurants** between **1 p.m. and 5 p.m.** and to have **dinner** between **8.30 p.m. and midnight** or, sometimes, until 1 a.m. The **cafés and bars** open their doors **between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. until 11 p.m.** or, in some cases, 1 a.m. It depends on the establishment.

**To go out in Madrid** is very easy. You have a lot of possibilities. On the one hand, you can visit the nightclubs open until 3 a.m. or 3.30 a.m. On the other hand, you find the **discotheques** open during the whole night until 6.30 a.m. or 7 a.m.

Madrid can be proud of its **public transport**. The buses, the underground and the trains cover Madrid. The **buses work between 6 a.m. and midnight**, while the **underground continue half and hour more, until 1.30 a.m.** The **trains start at 5 a.m. and keep working until midnight**. Moreover, during the night there is a bus service which covers the same routes as the underground from midnight until 6 a.m.

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