

TravelPast50

Mini Guide to Madrid, Spain

(Updated December 2024; Learn more about Spain reading our blog, [TravelPast50](#).)

[Madrid Tourism Office](#): Plaza Mayor, 27. Includes official Madrid gift shop called Tienda Casa de la Panadería

Museums

Prado Museum. The quintessential Spanish art collection along with the early European work that inspired it. Velazquez, Goya, El Greco, Murillo; Titian, Bosch, Rubens, Van Dyck, and more.

Reina Sofia Museum. Modern and contemporary art. Dalí, Miró, Juan Gris, Picasso including the masterpiece *Guernica*.

Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum. European art from 14th through 20th Centuries, including Renaissance, 19th Century American, Impressionism and more.

San Fernando Academy of Fine Arts. Paintings sculptures, drawings, photography, and decorative arts. Notable collection of Goya paintings and copper plate etchings, well displayed.

Sorolla Museum. Home and studio if Spanish painter Joaquin Sorolla y Bastida (1863-1923). Note limited hours.

CaixaForum. Former bank, now art and concert space (architects Herzog y De Meuron), features *La Estrella de Miró* tapestry on display through May 21, 2023. (Free, in the vestibule)

Cerralbo Museum. 50,000 objects, including stamps, coins, clocks, armor, archeological finds and art in the late 19th Century palace home.

Parks and Notable Public Places

El Retiro Park and Paseo del Prado. Named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2021, a “landscape of arts and sciences”.

Plaza España with famous statue of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.

Temple of Debod. A reconstructed ancient Egyptian temple. Walk here from Plaza España and continue to **Parque del Oeste**.

Campo del Moro/Sabatini Gardens Former grounds of the Royal Palace.

Plaza Mayor To sit with an expensive coffee and brandy and watch the world go by.

Madrid Río Park new development we’ve yet to explore on the River Manzanares.

Shopping

Fuencarral-Chueca-Malasaña neighborhoods. Modern, vintage, specialty shops in busy popular neighborhood. Walk north on Fuencarral from Gran Vía.

Sol-Preciados-Carmen. Where the popular department store, El Corte Ingles, sprouts from one building to the next. Between Puerta del Sol and Gran Vía.

Barrio de las Letras. Home décor boutiques in the old literary quarters, roughly between the Prado and Sol, especially Calle de las Huertas.

Calle Serrano in the Salamanca neighborhood, for designer and luxury shopping.

El Rastro Sunday market. An institution. South of Plaza Mayor from La Latina to Puerta de Toledo.

[Tienda Casa de la Panadería](#) Made-in-Spain gifts in the Plaza Mayor tourism office

[Real Fabrica](#) Mohair blankets, gourmet food, gift boxes, clothes, and home décor in the Barrio de Letras

[Cocol Madrid](#) Home décor in La Latina neighborhood

Shopping notes:

Keep your receipts. VAT tax is reimbursable when you fly out of the airport. Look for the kiosk.

Notable Spanish brands and designers include Desigual, Custo, Balenciaga, Loewe, Zara, and Kris' favorite, Adolfo Dominguez.

Crafts and gifts: Spain's still known for leather goods (shoes, gloves), pottery, stringed instruments, inlaid wood, damascene metal work (Toledo), home décor, fans, sweets...and of course olive oil, wine, jamón Iberico. (If you buy any foods, be sure it is exportable, i.e. sealed.)

Food Halls/Markets

San Miguel Market. The original grocery market, now an extremely busy tourist destination. Hold onto your bag and walk around for a look, at least. Just west of Plaza Mayor.

San Ildefonso Market, Fuencarral 57. Lively "gastro market" in industrial space; 3 floors with eighteen stalls.

Galerías Canalejas, Alcalá 12. Upscale food hall within a shopping mall.

[San Anton Market](#), Calle de Augusto Figueroa, 24. Chueca landmark with gourmet and everyday food shopping.

Bars and Restaurants

[Cervecería Alemana](#), C. de Principe 6. Traditional tapas, sandwiches, cured meats, anchovies, and good beer of course, at Plaza Santa Ana since 1904. One of Hemingway's faves.

[Taberna Real](#), Plaza de Isabel 8. Wine, vermouth, wonderful olives. One of Tom and Kris's old neighborhood faves.

[Meson de Champiñones](#), Cava de San Miguel 17. Mushrooms and much more in the caves below Plaza Mayor.

[Restaurant Botín](#). Lamb, goat, and Guinness Book of World Records oldest restaurant in the world.

[Casa Ciriaco](#), C. Mayor 84, Tapas and traditional Madrid fare in classic setting.

[La Carbonera Madrid](#), C. de Bernardo López García 11, Cozy place for gourmet cheeses, charcuterie, and great wine pairings.

[Restaurante Casa Salvador](#), C. de Barbieri 12, Traditional Madrid fare and setting with tribute photos to its bullfighting history.

[Celso y Manolo](#), C. de la Libertad 1. Contemporary twist on tapas, tomato salads and fresh foods with a vintage bar featuring vermouth.

[Restaurante El Ñeru](#), C. de Bordadores 5. In this Asturian bar and restaurant, come for the *Queso Cabrales* goat cheese, and stay for the *Fabada Asturiana* bean stew.

La Torre del Oro. Just a bar in Plaza Mayor filled with photos of bulls and the bullfighters they've gored. Not for the faint of heart.

La Venencia, C. Echegaray 7. Hemingway used to drink here, so why not? Get a bottle of *fino* sherry and find a corner to park yourself, preferably late into the night.

[Museo Chicote](#). C. Gran Vía 12. Cocktail bar across the street from Catalonia Hotel. Historic, classy, old haunt in the 1930s with photographs of celebs and their tables.

Update Per WSJ Feb 2024, near Prado (by curator Alejandro Vergara):

[Murillo Café](#), C/ de Ruiz de Alarcón 27, "Modern bistro featuring Venezuelan touches."

La Dolores, Plaza de Jesús, 4, "an old school tavern, ...classic tapas bar, very famous and very good."

Hotels

Hotel NH Collection Madrid Palacio de Tepa. Our favorite du jour, in a great neighborhood and with palace ruins visible beneath the lobby floor.

Hotel Riu Plaza Espana. Iconic building with new rooftop bar

Hotel Intur Palacio San Martín. In our old neighborhood near Plaza Isabel, feels like home.

Petit Palace Arenal. Very close to chocolate and churros at San Ginés, also near Sol.

Hotel Europa. Grand old classic right on Puerta del Sol.

More hotel brands we like in Spain: Barceló Hotels, Catalonia Hotels