Welcome to Madrid

This portico lined square is situated at the heart of Hapsburg Madrid, the old part of the city and one of the capital’s most charming districts.

Before Madrid became a capital city, with its wide avenues and boulevards, its footprint consisted of narrow streets, alleys and passageways, which today take us back to the times of swashbuckling swordsmen and medieval rogues.

The foundations of Plaza Mayor were laid, when Philip II's court moved to Madrid, on the site of the former Plaza del Arrabal, where the town's most popular market was located towards the end of the 15th century. In 1617, architect Juan Gómez de Mora was commissioned to create a greater uniformity amongst the buildings in this location, which for centuries had hosted popular entertainments, bullfights, beatifications, coronations and the occasional auto de fe.

Casa de la Panadería

Casa de la Panadería was built by Diego Sillero around 1590, but only the cellar and the ground floor of the original building remain today. It nevertheless served as the model copied by the rest of the buildings around the square. Included amongst the numerous functions it has held in the past is that of the principal bakery of the town, which fixed the price of bread so that the neediest residents could afford to buy it. It has also been the venue of royal lodgings, the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts, and the History Academy. At present it is home to the Plaza Mayor Tourist Center. The decoration we can see today on the façade was not always the same in the past due to numerous reforms and restorations. The murals on the façade, the work of Carlos Franco, represent mythological figures connected to the history of Madrid, such as the goddess Cybele.

Arco de Cuchilleros

On several occasions, fire has played a major role in configuring the square's appearance. The most devastating one occurred in 1790, which led to its reconstruction by architect Juan de Villanueva who lowered the building fronts by two storeys, enclosed the square at its corners and constructed nine entrance arches. Due to its monumental appearance, the most well-known of the arches is the Arco de los Cuchilleros with its steep steps leading up to the square. The picturesque buildings along this street catch the eye due to their height and leaning façades serving as...
buttresses. Its name, Cuchilleros, derives from the cutlers' workshops once located here who supplied the knives to the butchers in Plaza Mayor, where Casa de la Carnicería, at one time the general meat deposit, is located.

**Statue of Philip III**

The statue of the king on horseback is one of the most valuable works of art to be found on the streets of Madrid. Designed by Giambologna and completed by Pietro Tacca in 1616, it watched over the entrance to Casa de Campo for centuries until, in 1848, Queen Isabel II borrowed it for the city, placing it in Plaza Mayor. Only during the two Republics has the statue been removed from what is perhaps Madrid's most emblematic square.
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Interest data

**Address**
Plaza Mayor, 28012

**Web**

**Bus**
002, 3, 17, 18, 23, 31, 50, 65, N16, N26, M1

**Type**
Edificios y monumentos

**Tourist area**
Austrias

**Metro**
Ópera (L2, L5, R), Sol (L1, L2, L3), Tirso de Molina (L1)

**Cercanías (Local train)**
Madrid-Sol

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