

City of the embrace

A guide to the people, places and overloaded sharing plates specially chosen to immerse you in Spain's friendliest milieu.



Like any metropolis, Madrid is an ever-morphing constellation of stories, personalities and moving parts. But the Spanish capital can lay claim to one constant theme: welcoming everyone with open arms. This warm reception informs and infuses daily life. It's expressed through the endearing custom of greeting strangers in lifts and in the way cafés and tabernas feel like laidback community lounges. A social spirit feeds

a vibrant **(01) food culture** and gives an eclectic community of **(02) artisans & entrepreneurs** their friendlier edge. Easily accessed **(03) art and culture**, a fiercely defended sense of **(04) openness** and inspired **(05) green spaces and urbanism** are also rooted in Madrid's values. Embrace the city's spontaneous spirit and you'll discover plenty of hidden gems among our recommendations.





01.

Food culture

Here's a tasty idea: get acquainted with Madrileños through their passion for food. This ebullient city has been shaped by waves of workers and communities from around the world, their appetites sustaining a whopping 3,100 restaurants citywide. No need to be overwhelmed by all the options though. This tasting menu serves as a starting point – an insight into why food culture in Madrid is as much about social nutrition as discovering the most sumptuous dish. The frenetic but always friendly food culture says a lot about the city's inhabitants. Grab a stool and get to know them – one meal at a time.

Learn why cafés and tabernas function as quasi-community lounge rooms

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Try the brew at the birthplace of Madrid's budding speciality coffee movement

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Home to affable merchants, food markets also provide a platform for young aspiring chefs

MARKET LIFE

Young chefs and food merchants are bringing new life to empty stalls.

Neighbourhood markets are re-energising the edible ecosystem. Mercado de Vallehermoso has daring fusion menus, such as Kitchen 154, and a new organic sellers' section in the old loading dock. // mercadovallehermoso.es



COMMUNITY CAFÉ

Get a taste for a beloved community mess-hall.

Hosting lively conversations since 1887, this beloved café was revived in 2016. While coffee and churros flow over the front bar, grab a table,



order a hearty meal and soak up the atmosphere. From retirees reading the paper to rowdy packs of youngsters and impromptu business meetings, every facet of city life swirls together here with ease. // cafecomercialmadrid.com

COFFEE CULTURE

The café beloved by baristas.

Spearheading Madrid's specialist coffee revolution, the first Toma Café opened in 2011 and spawned legions of coffee-lovers. The crew roast their own beans, cook up a Latino-Asian inspired menu, and have a second, equally loved location. // tomacafe.es



GASTROFESTIVAL

This annual food culture festival is a vibrant (and edible) exploration of fashion, art and history – and a feast of specially cooked-up menus. //

Encompassing 450 restaurants and cultural spaces

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23 January to 10 February

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gastrofestivalmadrid.com/en

TOUCH THE SKY

Head to a rooftop bar for a tippie with a view.

"Vamos a tomar algo", which loosely translates to "Let's grab a drink", is possibly the most oft-repeated phrase in Madrid. This is a city that thrives on social interaction and an upsurge of new rooftop terraces happily oblige the population's thirst for a drink with a view. High above Gran Vía, and inspired by design tropes of 1950s Madrid, the new Picalagartos Sky Bar offers 360-degree views of some of the city's best-loved architectural gems and provides the ideal perch for a gin and tonic at sunset. //

picalagartos.com



MORE THE MERRIER

Ordering generous servings will make you lots of friends.

Nothing says more about Madrid's permanently outstretched, welcoming arms than its round-the-clock food culture. Avoid eye-rolls from waiters by replacing requests for tapas with fuller plates called *raciones*. Ordering like the locals will earn the approbation of everyone within earshot. Try Taberna de la Elisa for age-old fare prepared with flair, or the rambunctious Bar Colmada – a reimagined *ultramarios* (delicatessen) in the Malasaña district – for generous gourmet delicacies. //

eltricyclo.es/la-elisa; lacolmada.com



TASTE

MADRILEÑOS PREFER RACIONES – MADE FOR SHARING – TO TAPAS, SO EATING IS ALWAYS A JOINT EFFORT.



02.

Artisans & entrepreneurs

A quiet yet undeniably colourful uprising has transformed Madrid's streets in recent years.

Paying little heed to macro-economic headlines, a brigade of more optimistic artisans and designers have engineered their own fortunes, opening exciting new spaces, reinventing retail concepts or simply staying true to tradition. Retail has energised the city with a positive spirit, personified by cheery shopkeepers and veterans trading in treasure at the popular Sunday flea market, El Rastro. Strike up a conversation – you'll soon discover smiling Madrileños eager to share stories with you.

Meet the city's crusading cape specialist

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Tune in to the guitar artisans arming Spain's flamenco stars

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Peruse the stocked shelves of craftsmanship-themed souvenir shops

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Decode the artfully arranged signals on each shop's surface

MADE FOR WALKING

Adding character and context to city strolls.

For Walk With Me's Pablo Baque and Deira Reina, the logical step after launching a series of illustrated suburban maps in 2013 was to release a range of travel accessories. In 2018 they opened their first flagship, showing off well-crafted backpacks, small satchels, wallets and notebooks – and they're happy to show curious customers their in-house workshop. // walkwithmebrand.com



WHIMSICAL WINDOWS

Keep your eyes peeled for the city's myriad window displays.

Retail has roared back to life across town and the buoyant mood is expressed through window displays. Everywhere you look shops are striving to redirect passersby through their doors. While Kike Keller opts for the abstract, homewares shop Casa González & González lures customers with a nod to nostalgia, and El Moderno Concept Store is a popular design emporium. // gonzalez-gonzales.es



LOOK

ESCAPARATISMO (THE ART OF WINDOW DISPLAY) CAN BE A SERIOUS BUSINESS, BUT HUMOUR CAN ALSO TURN HEADS.



GUITAR ARTISANS

Find family-run workshops riffing on traditional rhythms.

Felix Manzanero attends to music aficionados from his workshop in La Latina, and Guitarrería Mariano Conde is famed for making custom instruments for flamenco star Paco Lucía.

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guitarrasmanzanero.com; marianoconde.com

EL RASTRO

Veer off the central trail on Calle de la Ribera de Curtidores and enter a labyrinth of treasure-laden side streets.

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One of Europe's largest open-air flea markets

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Open every Sunday from 09.00 to 15.00

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Populated by storied sellers

CAPE TOWN

The family firm that's been cloaking Madrileños for more than a century.

The world's only shop exclusively dedicated to capes, Capas Seseña has cloaked Spanish King Juan Carlos as well as Picasso, who loved his Seseña cape so much he asked to be buried in it.

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sesena.com



CULTURAL FABRIC

Where curios from Spain's past are given a bright future.

Rocio Muñoz's online shop of traditional Spanish wares expanded into a colourful space in Madrid's Las Letras district. The shelves of Real

Fabrica Espanola tell Spain's artisanal history through classic soaps, perfumes, food, wine and kitchenware. Muñoz even stocks headwear from the traditional farmers of Extremadura.

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realfabrica.es



03.

Art & culture

Who says culture has to be a highbrow affair?

Madrid has world-renowned museums, galleries and artists at its fingertips but as you carouse through the capital you'll notice how smaller-scale venues also brim with art and performance. Sustained by Madrileños' insatiably social spirit, the year-round cultural calendar often trickles onto the streets, which is why everyone always seems to be having such a good time. Whether it's a blockbuster theatre show on Madrid's Gran Vía, a thought-provoking exhibition in the city's cluster of galleries or a spirited post-show debate about the meaning of it all, Madrid's democratic approach to art fuels its upbeat, endlessly creative energy.

Madrid has 80 museums //

Make a Spanish song and dance about a buoyant musical theatre scene //

Venture into the (unpretentious) artistic underground underground

LA CASA ENCENDIDA Get courageously creative.

Breaking down barriers is what this art institution does best. From discipline-blurring exhibitions to building bridges between communities through talks and concerts, La Casa Encendida dares audiences to reconsider and discuss – and even dance.

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lacasaencendida.es



CULTURE CLUSTER See the highlights of the city.

Some of Spain's best museums are in close proximity. CentroCentro celebrates native talent inside city hall, the Prado is home to Goya and Bosch, while the Thyssen shows an

extraordinary private collection. Walk down the Paseo de Prado to arrive at modern-art mecca the Reina Sofía. //
centrocentro.org;
museodelprado.es;
museothyssen.org;
museoreinasofia.es



VIBRANT VENUES Spectacles big and small.

Matadero Madrid is a former abattoir turned cultural precinct, the Conde Duque Cultural Centre hosts events and the Circo Price delights with a rousing programme. Then there's Malasaña's micro-theatre and its 15-minute plays. Even if your Spanish isn't up to scratch, the performances are captivating. //
microteatro.es;
mataderomadrid.org;
condedudemadrid.es;
teatrocircoprice.es

ARCO

As gallerists and collectors gather for Spain's biggest annual art fair, they're joined by smaller fairs, exhibitions and openings.

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27 February to 3 March

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49 galleries hold simultaneous openings for Apertura

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ifema.es/arcomadrid_06

SALA EQUIS Get seen at the big screen.

Rekindling the Alba Cinema wasn't enough for the team behind the renamed Sala Equis; they wanted to add sparkle to the silver screen too. An ever-changing programme and guest curators keep things interesting, while a second hall hosts concerts and a lively bar.

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salaequis.es



SPECTATOR SPORT Madrid's vibrant theatre scene means there's always a hot ticket to be had.

Take a stroll down the newly revamped and refurbished Gran Vía and you'll find it hard to ignore the neon-lit marquees and swamped box offices that make up Madrid's unofficial Broadway. Spanish renditions of *El Rey Leon* (*The Lion King*), *West Side Story*, *Billy Elliot* and even *El Médico* (based on author Noah Gordon's historical novel) reel in the crowds. Some productions even project subtitles so foreign audiences can follow the fun. The city's enthusiasm for a swashbuckling show throws a spotlight on its fun-loving soul.



WATCH

WITH MORE THAN 100 THEATRES, MADRID NEVER TIRES OF PUTTING ON A SHOW.



04.

Openness

Madrid's diverse population has increased as Spaniards have emigrated to the capital for work and foreigners have been won over the city's charms. Madrileños embrace the newly arrived with enthusiasm and ease, and openmindedness is now a badge of city pride. To commemorate Madrid World Pride in 2017, the city council produced documentary film *The Best Day of My Life* – a moving portrait told through the eyes of visitors showing how the city's values of tolerance and diversity have made it a beacon for likeminded people the world over. We invite you to embrace this same affectionate spirit firsthand.

This tolerant metropolis hosts one of the world's largest gay pride celebrations

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The city is home to vibrant Asian, Latino and African communities

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Multicultural festivals and international institutes are hallmarks of Madrid's cultural calendar

PLUCKY DRINK

Peacock your way into Pavoneo in Chueca.

Dancer and one-time TV daredevil Pedro Carrasco opened his peacock-themed bar on the eve of Madrid World Pride in 2017. After ordering a drink, ask about the meaning of the bar's name – it's a topic that always inspires debate. // pavoneo.com



MELTING POT

The Lavapiés district stirs food, art and upbeat atmosphere into a heady mix.

No matter which way you turn through Lavapiés, a sensorial feast awaits. Tuck into Senagalese mafé in Plaza



Nelson Mandela or Bengal curry on Calle Lavapiés. Failing that, take time to peruse the galleries on Calle Doctor Fourquet or simply sit and soak up the sun on the Plaza Arturo Barea. // esmadrid.com/en

CASA DE MEXICO

The city with soft-power pull.

Home to 137 foreign embassies and consulates, Madrid has a network of national soft-power institutes, the latest of which is Mexico. With a Diego Rivera in the art collection, tequila tastings, a cinema and shop, this former palace is open to everyone. // casademexico.es



MADRID ORGULLO (GAY PRIDE)

An inclusive celebration of the city's values of tolerance and diversity that lures millions onto the streets each year.

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27 June to 7 July

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Two million attend the main Saturday parade

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madridorgullo.com

MULTICULTURAL CALENDAR

A year-round feast for the senses.

Highlights of the capital's cultural calendar include Chinese New Year celebrations that transform



the Usera district, August's Virgen de Urkupiña parade (which sees 2,000 members of Bolivia's largest diaspora dance down Paseo de Prado) and December's Christmas Culture Fair, an exploration of how 70 countries celebrate the holiday season.

CROSS YOUR HEART

To properly represent its population, Madrid made sure all kinds of relationships were visibly inscribed onto city crossing signs.

Symbols speak volumes about a city's values. To coincide with the 10-day celebration of World Pride in 2017, the city awoke to a population of more affectionate couples illuminating 72 pedestrian crossings. Gone was the silhouette of a solitary man, replaced by a series of couples of all persuasions. An instant icon, the hand-holding red-and-green men and women expanded onto a total of 100 traffic lights and are now permanent fixtures of the streetscape.



WALK

THE NEW TRAFFIC LIGHTS REFLECT MADRID'S SPIRIT OF TOGETHERNESS AND AN IMPROVED GENDER BALANCE.



05.

Green spaces & urbanism

Madrid's streetscapes have been undergoing a liberation of late, with an ambitious wave of considered urbanism and rehabilitation making the physical environment friendlier.

Bollards are being removed to make pedestrianised *calles*, smoother surfaces and more foliage the norm. As walking from A to B becomes easier, the city council has installed pathfinding maps and more water fountains to ensure people stay hydrated while soaking up the sun. Good weather sets the stage for a constant stream of open-air art and culture.

A love of the outdoors goes to the heart of Madrileños' egalitarian attitude: the city is an equal playing field where everyone is welcome.

Vast parks are ripe for discovery

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World-class public transport is a winning formula

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A regenerated river has rewritten the city's future

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR Regenerating life in the city.

Hailed as Europe's boldest urban-infrastructure project when it was unveiled in 2011, Madrid Río buried a multi-lane riverside motorway and thus replaced air-polluting traffic with a 10km-long tree-filled park. It has now become a locus of quotidian life and the opening of dams in 2016 helped to regenerate wildlife, ultimately creating a green lung at the heart of the Manzanares River.

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esmadrid.com/en



MAD FOR BICIMAD

Get around the city on two wheels with public bicycles.

Madrid's public electric bike scheme was widely embraced when it launched in 2015. With a 207km (and growing) cycling lane network and the number of e-bikes set to double to 15,660, the good news is the scheme is open to visitors too.

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bicimad.com



RIDE

E-BIKES, SCOOTERS, ZERO-EMISSION MOTORCYCLES AND CARSHARES MAKE MADRID'S TRANSPORT ECO-FRIENDLY.



PARQUE DEL CAPRICO

Take a relaxing wander through history.

This park is a paragon of the city council's rehabilitative agenda. It was created in 1784 and contains English, Italian and French gardens. A civil-war bunker has been opened for tours and the Temple de Baco adds an air of majesty.

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esmadrid.com/en

GRAN VÍA REVIVED

The city is rejoicing at the recent refit of its central boulevard, which has been beautified by wider pavements and less traffic.

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Initial work began in 1910

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240 trees have been added

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Plaza Mayor has also had a careful makeover

CASA DE CAMPO

A vast stretch of countryside on the city's doorstep.

This urban forest wasn't always quite so peaceful: it was once a royal hunting estate and a civil-war battlefield. Take a cable car to the heart of the 1,723-hectare expanse or ascend the Faro de Moncloa lookout for spectacular views.

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esmadrid.com/en



OPEN-ACCESS ART

The country's cultural capital.

Making public spaces more hospitable means parks and squares can play host to a plethora of cultural activities, such as majestic installations to mark the 400th

anniversary of Plaza Mayor to CiudadDistrito's 200 activities spread across 21 districts. Emblazoned on pavements, 1,100 poetry fragments encourage city dwellers to view walking as "a poetic act".

//
ciudadistrito.es



embraces you

esmadrid.com/en

MADRID × MONOCLE