

# Where to enjoy good film in Madrid

You'll find cinemas all over the city, but there are a few independent movie houses that deserve special mention. If you're looking to see good film in Madrid, whether that means independent, foreign, blockbuster or simply in original version (versión original, i.e. V.O.), check out the list below.

A great website to find out about free or €3 film screenings in original version every week is [madridfree.com](http://madridfree.com). You can also use [entradas.com](http://entradas.com) for complete listings and buying tickets online throughout the city.

Also note that most cinemas have a "*día del espectador*" when tickets cost less, and if you have a "*carnet joven*" or one of many types of discount cards, you can usually get a few euros knocked off.

## 1. Plaza de los Cubos, (metro Plaza de España)

Right by Plaza de España, you'll find two cinemas – [Cines Renoir](#) (c/ Princesa, 3 & Martín de los Heros, 12) and [Golem](#) (c/ Martín de los Heros, 14) – showcasing films from around the world in original version, with subtitles in Spanish. Prices are standard. [Cines Renoir](#) has another location near **Retiro**, on calle Narváez, 42 (metros Goya & Ibiza).

I recommend getting a drink before your movie starts at the film-bookshop across the street, [Ocho y Medio Libros de Cine](#).

## 2. Yelmo Cines Ideal, Plaza de Jacinto

## **Benavente (metros Sol & Tirso de Molina)**

**Cine Ideal** is perhaps the most popular movie theater in Madrid showing films in original version. I highly recommend this cinema because they feature great blockbuster movies as well as independent films, from Spain and around the world, and they're never dubbed.

### **3. La Filmoteca Española (Cine Doré), c/ Santa Isabel, 3 (metro Antón Martín)**

One of Madrid's most special places, **Cine Doré** sits in a very old theater and revives all types of films from different eras and corners of the world. Here you can see movies from the 50's from Korea, to the 90's from France, and even more recent films from the US – you never know! Nevertheless, if you go, you'll be happy to find yourself in a charming atmosphere and tickets are extremely cheap, just **2,50€!** (and only 2€ if you have a student ID or *carnet joven*)

### **4. La Cineteca, Plaza de Legazpi, 8 (metro Legazpi)**



Inside [El Matadero](#), a former slaughterhouse turned cultural hub, La Cineteca is an awesome theater showcasing all types of films, from documentaries to independent foreign film festivals, at an unbeatable price: **3,50€**. Some are even free. Plus you get to walk around [El Matadero](#), which, if you haven't been, is an absolute must.

## **5. Sala Berlanga, c/ Andrés Mellado 53 (metros Islas Filipinas & Argüelles)**

If you're looking to see Spanish films, this is the place. Sala Berlanga showcases Spanish-language films for **3€**, and it is a hallmark of Spanish cinema culture in Madrid.

## 6. Cultural Centers

You can also see screenings at some of Madrid's most welcoming cultural centers and embassies (usually for free), such as the [French Institute](#), [Korean Cultural Center](#) and [Russian Cultural Center](#).

## 7. Outdoor Summer Cinema

Madrid's cultural centers, museums and municipal buildings are also great at putting on films outside, either on their terraces or rooftops, or in their indoor patios, making the most of the city's cool summer nights. [Espacio Madrid](#) usually puts up a good listing.

**What's your favorite cinema in Madrid?  
Have we missed something? Let us know!**

Also check out: [Salaeguis, a former XXX theatre that's been transformed into one of the city's hotspots near Tirso de Molina](#)

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## Madrid Museums: The Obvious and Not-so-obvious (and how to get in for free)

Here's a long list of Madrid museums worth visiting while you're here. And to make things easier, we're breaking it down into two parts: the obvious (like the Prado) and the not-so-obvious (like Cerralbo). We'll also tell you how to get in for



free!

If you've already read up on the famous Madrid museums, then scroll down...

## The Obvious:

All of these Madrid museums are classified as "obvious" because they're situated along the two great boulevards – Paseo del Prado and Paseo de Recoletos – where you'll find the city's finest arts institutions, including the *Golden Triangle of Art* which refers to the first three institutions on this list. Only one place is not situated here – the Royal Palace.

### 1. [Prado Museum](#)

Spain's national art museum houses a wide collection of European art from the 12th to the early 19th centuries, and its most notable works are by Spanish painters, Diego Velázquez, Francisco de Goya and El Greco. Considered one of the best museums in the world, the Prado's most famous piece is *Las Meninas* by Velazquez. Do give yourself a few hours to walk around – the Prado is gigantic!

#### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always for under-18-year-olds and students ages 18-25 (with valid ID); Sundays and holidays from 5pm-7pm; and Mon-Sat from 6pm-8pm.

**[Prices & Hours](#):** General admission 14€. Open Mon-Sat from 10am–8pm. Sundays and holidays from 10am-7pm.

**Metro:** Banco de España

**Where:** Paseo del Prado (s/n)

### 2. [Reina Sofia Museum](#)



Spain's national museum of 20th-century art is located at the bottom of El Paseo del Prado, near Atocha train station. The Reina Sofía's permanent collection consists of art by Spanish painters such as Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dalí, and its most famous piece is Picasso's *Guernica*. Temporary exhibits feature works by international artists, plus the building's impressive architecture and free-access art library are alone worth a visit!

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Sundays from 1:30pm-7pm; weekdays from 7-9pm (except Tuesdays).

**Prices & Hours:** Mon-Sat from 10am-9pm and Sundays from 10am-7pm. Closed on Tuesdays.

**Metro:** Atocha

**Where:** c/ Santa Isabel, 52

Additionally, you can visit a glass palace situated in the middle of Retiro Park featuring works from the museum.



### 3. [Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza](#)

This is my brother's favorite. In fact, he loved the Thyssen so much that he actually visited it two days in a row (during a five-day visit). The Thyssen is named after its founder and houses one of the largest private collections in the world. You'll find an amazing permanent collection of more than 1,600 masterpiece paintings spanning seven centuries of art and representing a myriad of genres, as well as must-see temporary exhibits showcasing Van Gogh to Pop Art.

#### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Mondays 12-4pm.

**Hours:** Mondays 12pm-4pm; Tues-Sun 10am-7pm.

**Metro:** Banco de España

**Where:** Paseo del Prado, 8



## 4. [Caixa Forum](#)



Created by the Catalonian bank, La Caixa, the first thing that stands out about Caixaforum is its impressive exterior design, including an urban garden wall. As you step inside, you'll notice that the building's interior design follows suit. Architecture aside, here you'll see outstanding temporary exhibits on everything from up-and-coming photographers to Pixar!

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always free for La Caixa clients and under-16-year-olds.

**Prices & Hours:** General Admission €4. Open Sun-Mon from 10am-8pm

**Metro:** Atocha

**Where:** Paseo del Prado, 36

## 5. [The Royal Palace](#)

The Royal Palace is one of the most beautiful spots in the city, situated in Plaza de Oriente, facing the Royal Opera House and overlooking the Gardens of Sabatini. It's the

official residence of the King of Spain, although he doesn't actually live there. Used today for national ceremonies and as a popular museum, Madrid's Palacio Real is the largest royal palace in all of Western Europe, boasting 3,418 rooms which are ornately decorated with fine paintings, sculptures and tapestries. One last thing – if you go here, you absolutely must pay a visit to its gardens, called “**El Campo del Moro**”, located just behind the palace (always free and open to the public at the same hours as the palace).

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** For anyone with an EU or Iberoamerican passport/residency card/work permit from Mon-Thurs from 4pm-6pm during April-Sept; and from 6pm-8pm during Oct-Mar.

**Prices & Hours:** Normal entrance fee is 10€. Students with valid ID get a discount (5€). In Winter (Oct-Mar) open daily from 10am-6pm and in Summer (Apr-Sep) open daily from 10am-8pm.

**Metro:** Ópera (line 5 & 2) and Principe Pio (line 10)

**Where:** c/ Bailén (s/n)

## 6. [Palacio de Cibeles](#)





Madrid's most emblematic building, Palacio de Cibeles is situated in the famous Plaza de Cibeles which joins Madrid's two boulevards – Paseo del Prado and Paseo de Recoletos. One wouldn't imagine that this ornately decorated palace was once Madrid's post office, but it was indeed! It was turned into a cultural center in 2013, and now holds free exhibits throughout its first four floors. It also boasts a café, restaurant, and [a rooftop terrace on the 6th floor](#) that offers breathtakingly beautiful views of the city. You can also visit the lookout point at the top of the building for just 2€, where you'll surely get one of your best pics of Madrid.

### **The lookout point (mirador):**

**When is it free?** Free entrance every first Wednesday of the month.

**Price & Hours:** 2€ for adults and 0,50€ for children under 12 years of age. Visits are held every thirty minutes from Tues-Sun from 10:30am-1:30pm and from 4pm-7pm. Closed on Mondays. You must reserve tickets at the CentroCentro office

situated near the main door of the building.

## The exhibition spaces:

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always.

**Hours:** Mon-Sun from 10am-8pm. Closed on Mondays.

**Metro:** Banco de España

**Where:** Plaza Cibeles, 1

## The Not-So-Obvious

Madrid has some wonderful art havens scattered about the city which are less spoken of, although still much deserving of a visit. Here are some of our favorites:

### 1. [La Casa Encendida](#)

Created by the bank, Caja Madrid, you'll find "The Burning House" located just a five-minute walk from the Reina Sofia Museum. This arts and cultural center showcases modern and contemporary art exhibits, and also hosts many cultural events, screenings, workshops concerts, and more. Entrance is always free, and the café is very nice too.

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always.

**Hours:** 10am-10pm everyday

**Metro:** Embajadores

**Where:** Ronda de Valencia, 2

### 2. [El Matadero](#)



This is one of our absolute favorite spots in Madrid. A former pig slaughterhouse, El Matadero was turned into an arts and cultural center in 2006. It has many warehouses (naves) showcasing film, theater performances and art galleries, as well as events and a great café called “La Cantina” where you can taste local food products from Madrid. We highly recommend going here, and taking a stroll along Madrid’s river (Madrid Río) afterwards which is just across the street. [Here’s a more in-depth article we wrote about El Matadero.](#)

#### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always

**Hours:** Tues-Fri from 4pm to 10pm; Sat-Sun from 11am to 9pm

**Metro:** Legazpi (line 3, yellow)

**Where:** Paseo de la Chopera, 14

### 3. [Museo Naval](#)

Although Spain’s maritime museum is situated on the Paseo del Prado, we don’t consider it as obvious as the ones listed above. Many people are surprised when they go here, precisely because it’s not talked about enough. The exhibits take you



through Spain's maritime history in chronological order, showcasing artefacts such as old coins, maps, books, weapons, and more.

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always (recommended donation of 3€)

**Hours:** Tues-Sun from 10am-7pm. (During August it closes at 3pm). Closed on Monday.

**Metro:** Banco de España

**Where:** Paseo del Prado, 5

## 4. [Museo del Romanticismo](#)



Located in the heart of Madrid's trendiest neighborhoods – Malasaña and Chueca – you should definitely stop by this museum if you're in the area. El Museo del Romanticismo gives you insight into the history, art and daily life in Spain

during the Romantic Era (European intellectual movement during the 19th C). And I must admit that my favorite thing about this museum is its quaint and hidden garden café. If you're not into museums, at least pop in for a coffee or tea.

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Saturdays from 2pm onwards and Sundays

**Prices & Hours:** General admission 4€. Closed on Mondays. Sundays from 10am-3pm. In Summer (May 1-Oct 31) Tues-Sat from 9:30am-8:30pm. In Winter, (Nov 1-Apr 30) from 9:30am-6:30pm.

**Metro:** Tribunal or Alonso Martínez

**Where:** Calle San Mateo, 13

## 5. [Museo Sorolla](#)

This charming museum is my mother-in-law's favorite, not only for its beautiful art pieces but also for the old architecture of the building itself, which was the former private residence of Spanish painter, Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida (1863 – 1923), who is especially famous for his portraits and landscapes. Another note – my mother fell in love with this museum too.

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Saturdays from 2pm onwards, and Sundays.

**Prices & Hours:** General admission 3€. Tues-Sat from 9:30am-8pm. Sundays from 10am-3pm. Closed on Mondays.

**Metro:** Iglesia and Rubén Darío

**Where:** Paseo del General Martínez Campos, 37

## 6. [Museo Cerralbo](#)

[The Cerralbo Museum](#) is by far one of my favorite places in Madrid. Tucked away on a side street near Plaza de España and Templo de Debod, this stunning little museum was a former residence of the Marquis of Cerralbo, who lived here with his family in the 19th century. As you walk through the mansion's corridors and up the elegant stairwell to the ballroom, you'll



find everything remains exactly in tact, from the furniture and art pieces to the wall colors and lighting. Read our full post: [Museo Cerralbo, an art lover's dream house](#).

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** After 2pm on Saturdays; Thursdays from 5pm-8pm; Sundays.

**Prices & hours:** General admission €3. Open Tues–Sat 9:30am-3pm; Thursday also from 5-8pm; Sundays and holidays from 10am-3pm. I highly recommend [booking a guided tour](#) in English, Spanish or French

**Metro:** Plaza de España

**Where:** Calle Ventura Rodríguez, 17

## 7. [Casa Museo Lope de Vega](#)

This 16th-century house was the former home of Spanish writer, Lope de Vega, who was famous during the “Golden Age” of Spanish literature. His house is located in Madrid’s “Barrio de las Letras”, a central neighborhood whose streets are named after the several famous Golden Age writers who also lived there, such as Miguel de Cervantes, Quevedo and Góngora. Lope de Vega resided in this house during the last 25 years of his life, from 1610-35. His home was turned into a national monument and museum in 1935. Here you can see his private collection of art, furniture, books and more. To visit, you **must make a reservation in advance** for a free, guided tour (see details below).

### [Website](#)

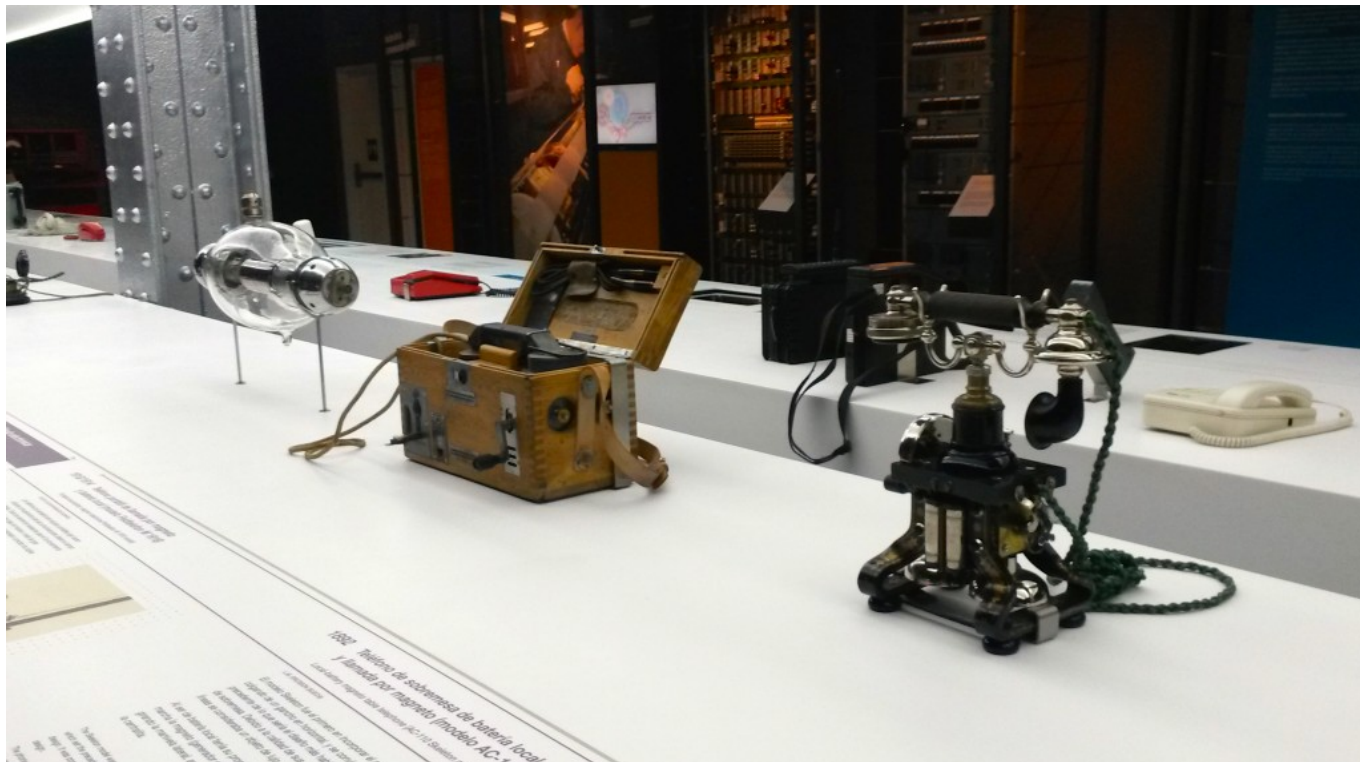
**When is it free?** Always.

**Hours:** Tues-Sun from 10am-6pm. Guided tours begin every half hour and are available in Spanish, English and French. [Make a Reservation by](#) telephone (91 429 92 16) or email (casamuseolopedevega@madrid.org).

**Metro:** Antón Martín and Sol

**Where:** Calle de Cervantes, 11

## 8. [Espacio Fundación Telefónica](#)



This arts and cultural exhibition space was created by the telecommunications company, Telefónica, and is always free and conveniently located on the Gran Vía. We highly recommend paying a visit, not only because it's free and has good air conditioning, but also because you'll find surprisingly current and interactive art exhibits. Plus, one of our Naked Madrid writers, Alex, recommends this place as a [great first date idea!](#)

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always.

**Hours:** every day from 10am-8pm.

**Metro:** Gran Vía (line 1 & 5)

**Where:** c/ Fuencarral, 3

## 9. [Museo de América](#)

This national museum houses 25,000 pieces of art and historical artifacts from the American continent. My friend, Ryan, wanted to make sure that I mentioned the shrunken heads

on display here (apparently, native Americans used to shrink dead humans' heads and use them as talismans).

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** For under-18-year-olds, over-65, university students and unemployed (with valid ID), holders of carné joven.

**Prices & Hours:** General Admission 3€. Tues-Sat from 9:30am-3pm; Thurs from 9:30am-3pm; Sundays from 10am-3pm; Closed on Mondays.

**Metro:** Moncloa

**Where:** Avenida de los Reyes Católicos, 6

## 10. [Fundación Mapfre](#)

This foundation was created by the insurance company, Mapfre, and exhibits art mostly from the last third of the 19th century to after World War II. It also showcases a lot of photography. The foundation has two rooms, both located next to each other.

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always.

**Hours:** Mon from 2pm-8pm. Tues-Sat from 10am-8pm. Sun/holidays from 11am-7pm.

**Metro:** Colón

**Where:** Paseo de Recoletos, 23

## 11. [Conde Duque](#)



I have particularly fond memories of this cultural center because I used to go here often during university. Located in one of my favorite neighborhoods – Conde Duque – this building served as the former barracks of the Royal Guard Corps and was turned into a cultural center in 1983. Ever since, it has used its enormous space wisely. Here you can see free exhibits including large scale art projects, photography and documentaries. Its space is also used for concerts, performances, dance rehearsals, book archives, and even [outdoor cinema](#) which runs from July through September.

### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always.

**Hours:** Tues-Sat from 10.30am-2pm and 5.30pm-9pm.  
Sundays/Holidays from 10.30am-2pm.

**Metro:** Noviciado, Plaza de España, San Bernardo and Ventura Rodríguez.

**Where:** Calle Conde Duque 11

## 12. [Museo del Traje](#)

Madrid's fashion museum showcases different modes throughout

the centuries. Although its current name is rather recent, the museum first opened in 1925 as “Exposición del Traje Regional e Histórico”, meaning the *exhibit on regional and historic attire*. Today it showcases a wide range of collections as well as cool activities and events which you can see [here](#).

#### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Saturdays from 2:30pm on; Sundays. If you're under 18, over 65, a student between 18-28 years old.

**Prices & Hours:** General admission is 3€. Open Tues-Sat from 9:30am-7pm. Sundays and holidays from 10am-3pm.

**Metro:** Moncloa

**Where:** Avenida de Juan de Herrera, 2.

## 13. [La Tabacalera Promoción del Arte](#)

[La Tabacalera](#) is a very unique community center in Madrid that occupies an abandoned factory and holds free activities on a daily basis, from salsa and capoeira classes to concerts and markets. Adjacent to the community area is an exhibition space that is free and open to the public, and mainly showcases photography and contemporary art works. Warning: it's a large and almost spooky space.

#### [Website](#)

**When is it free?** Always

**Hours:** Mon-Fri from 12pm-8pm. Saturday, Sunday and holidays from 11am-8pm. Closed on Mondays.

**Metro:** Embajadores

**Where:** Calle Embajadores 51 (the community center is number 53)

## General Information:

\*Most museums allow free entrance to under-18-year-olds and over-65-year-olds, as well as free entrance or a considerable discount to university students with valid ID and groups of over 5 people.



\*\*All of Madrid's museums allow free entrance on the following holidays: April 18th (World Heritage Day), May 18th (International Museum Day), October 12th (National Spanish Holiday) and December 6th (Day of the Spanish Constitution).

**As always, if we've left out any of your favorite art institutions or museums, please let us know! We intend on expanding this list.**

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## **Best Cafe-bookshops in Madrid, Round 1!**

Coffee shops selling books? Bookshops selling coffee? However you call them, here are five wonderful café-bookshops in Madrid where you can enjoy a cup of coffee or a glass of wine while surrounded by good reads. (See [round two](#) for more!)

### **[1. Ocho y Medio Libros de Cine](#)**



This charming bookshop (featured in the cover photo) specializes in cinema, and boasts a cozy café and outdoor seating area. I love going here for a drink and a *tosta* right before [seeing a film](#) at one of the independent movie theaters just across the street. All screenings are in original version with Spanish subtitles. A tip: this makes for a great date night!

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Martín de los Heros, 11
- **Metro:** Plaza de España

**Also read:** [Where to enjoy good film in Madrid](#)

## 2. [La Libre](#)



This is my mom's favorite cafe in Madrid. Why? Because a few years ago while she was visiting me in the dead of winter, we went in to warm up after a visit to the [Reina Sofia Museum](#) around the corner. When she ordered a coffee, the server said, "No ma'am, I think you need a whisky." He couldn't have been more right! They also have nice teas and snacks to nibble on, from breakfast pastries to empanadas.

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** c/ Argumosa, 39
- **Metro:** Atocha

## 3. [La Infinito](#)





This little café-bookshop lies on a corner in Lavapiés and serves up coffee, books and art on a daily basis. Not only does it have a welcoming ambience and lots of light streaming in through its tall glass windows, but it also throws great events, from **micro-theater performances** (one of which took place in the café's bathroom!) to popular weekend brunches.

- *image from La Infinito*
- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** c/ Tres Peces, 22
- **Metro:** Antón Martín & Lavapiés

#### 4. [La Fugitiva](#)





Books are the centrepiece at this cafe, and I love how its window seats and tiny bar are nestled between towering bookshelves and overflowing tables displaying bestsellers and rare reads. La Fugitiva has all you need from a café (coffee and sweets) and all you could ask of a bookstore – readings, talks, workshops, and of course, that distinct smell of books.



- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** c/ de Santa Isabel, 7
- **Metro:** Antón Martín

## 5. Tipos Infames. Libros y Vinos



**Wine and books? Quite a killer combination in my opinion.** Located right off the popular Calle Fuencarral, this trendy bookshop, café and wine bar is a favorite of many in Malasaña. Tipos Infames offers a much appreciated rest from the bustling shops and streets in the area. It has a lot of seating area, a full bar and high ceilings, making it feel open, friendly and comfortable. It's a great place to go with friends for a quieter conversation in the afternoon. Plus they throw fun events, so make sure to follow them on social media.

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** c/ San Joaquín, 3
- **Metro:** Tribunal

## **Keep reading Round 2 of Madrid's Best Cafe-bookshops**

And if you're looking for a few of our favorite cafe in Madrid *without* books:

- [Pepe Botella, a coffee place where you can think](#)
- [Toma Café, fuel up, feel hip](#)
- [Acid Café, seasonal, minimalist and just good coffee](#)

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## **El Campo de Cebada, a mix of live music, politics & drinking**

I've been in Madrid for 5 months now and I want to share somewhere with you. There's nowhere as special to me as [El Campo de Cebada](#) for a place to relax. It's quite unique in



what it has to offer. It's a **free space** where you can lie in the sun, the shade, drink beer and listen to **live music** or play **sports**. It's even a place where green and reform-minded political groups go to spread their word. Oh, and they have a theatre. How awesome is that?

Any lover of sun, sociality and really cheap booze, should come to [EL Campo de Cebada](#).



from [plataformaarquitectura.cl](#)

It's not just some commercialized private space. After the collapse of a sports complex in the same area, an association of neighborhoods bought the plot with a grant from the **City of Madrid**. From here, people in the surrounding area had a stake in how to invest the money.

The idea was to create an inclusive temporary space where the **community** could get involved and where they could create value. Instead of an empty disused space, the creation of **EL Campo de Cebada** allows people to do **sport, socialize and pursue other projects**. But, yes you read correctly – temporary. Cebada is there to fill in the vacuum and it will leave when the community gets the funding for a new sports complex.

And this is one more reason for why it's special. It's not going to be there forever.



I promise you're yet to find anything like it. From your first encounter, by **La Latina Metro** you'll probably be surprised to see passers-by cramming around spy-holes in its graffitied walls and people flowing endlessly in and out of its gate. The hum of enjoyment comes from somewhere.

What could be so interesting?

If you go over for a peek...

First you hear the noise. Like a school when it breaks and you can hear the happy roar of children playing.

You see lots of people. **Football, basketball, socializing, Botellón** (people casually drinking outside) and of course, smoking. There's art all up the walls. There are people sat in wooden stands and others on benches. **All walks of life** can be found, from musicians, entrepreneurs, students, workers, the old and the young; from the sophisticated, to the -let's say-drunk.





I can't help but feel welcome. Everyone is sharing one place. They're all happy. The sun makes everything look good.

Plus, I get the pirate vibe from the makeshift **DIY atmosphere!** And that's hard to find, I assure you.

**My advice:** grab some **beer** or cold **drinks** and a friend. Take a **ball**, **Frisbee**, **guitar** or **book** (if your alone!) and go. Go and **relax**. Soak it in.

If there was ever a day made for this, that day is Sunday. Starting early, like 10am, you can walk around El Rastro and see all the goods and wares they have to offer in what is Madrid's massive open market. I managed to get a guitar for only €50! And then head for **Cebada**.

At around 1pm, **live music** begins. It's often similar faces keeping the spirit alive, with the odd newcomer in between. But it has always been exciting. I've seen an amazing barbershop quartet, a comedian guitarist, a charming folk singing couple, improvisation, blues and some Spanish classics.



from [plataformaarquitectura.cl](http://plataformaarquitectura.cl)

Here until 3am is the perfect place to grab a Mahou and relax in the sun. You're welcome to stay all day and I like to make an afternoon of it.

On some weeks you can also find the same space (with the music!) turned into a **political hive-mind**. People from all parts of the (Leftist) political spectrum set up stalls to give you information. From memory there were anarchist stalls, socialist stalls, ones on green issues, democratic reform and women's rights (hot topic right now). I've even gone there and found a local ecological food market mixed with talks on green consumerism and responsible business models. If politics is your cup of tea – this place is too. You can also sharpen up on your Spanish.

There are always things going on at El Campo de Cebada. Check out their [website](#) from time to time. Up and coming is a festival from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> and a [TEDx Madrid Salon](#) talk on July 14th (here's [TEDxMadrid's official site](#))

You know you've found somewhere special when you stumble across a space for bringing a community together for fun and for raising awareness about important issues affecting everyone. If there is one voice here, for me it says '**we are a community and we can act**'.

**Sports and music, beer and politics, speaking Spanish. I really can say no more.**

So, if you want to be somewhere and not feel like an anonymous person at a bar or club, go there. You want to chat in the sun with friends, beer and music? Go there. I've had some amazing experiences and I think you'd be missing out. **So, go, go, go!**

**El Campo de Cebada**

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Events Calendar](#)

**Address:** Plaza de la Cebada, 4

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# **Flowers are nice (but this First Date is better) Part 1**





The moment: Check your phone or ditch all together

I get nervous and will probably continue to get nervous when planning a first date. It's not easy. It can even be daunting. You might have just met the girl/boy on a drunken Saturday night and you find yourself trying to come up with a way to entertain, show off, and come across as interesting and intelligent all at once. So I'm back to getting nervous and with little idea of what might or might now work.

Topics of interest can be hard to find but I believe that the location of the date should tie into the conversation. So rather than the usual routine of restaurant then drinks, this is a bit more dynamic and Madrileño (known for going to lots of places on one night).

The idea behind my method is to take your date to at least 3 different places on a given night. Each place will compliment each other and yet offer a very different component of the night. I have included a route order to help. All the places will be in walking distance from each other.

Part 1 is taking the arts and culture route. Not the Prado and its thousands of archangels, but more modern and contemporary offerings. Something more quirky to get the conversation flowing.

This in no way will guarantee you get laid on the first night. Too many factors depend on that result. However, it should reduce those awkward silent moments because you're grasping for a common topic. Quick tip for the awkward moment, just kiss him/her. There is no perfect moment. Only the courage to move your head forward 5 inches.

**Act One:** [Fundacion Telefonica](#) in Calle Fuencarral 3





## Fundación Telefonica

We start in the Fundacion Telefonica on Fuencarral. This gallery is always free and almost always open, except Mondays. It regularly changes the collections and usually has photography showing. I am no art student but when you are confronted with space geese and watching a video of their training to fly to the moon, it makes you smile and realise we live in a great place (Moon Goose Analogue, 2011-1012, Agnes Meyer-Brandis). So quickly check out the website and see what's on, the stranger the better as you don't need to be knowledgeable. Only a sense of humour is required.

Best time: 18-20h

Metro: Gran Via

**Act Two:** [Aìò](#) in Corredera Baja de San Pablo, 25 (mentioned in a [previous article](#))





Now that we have started down the cultural road, we cannot go too formal with the restaurant. It needs to fit the setting but shouldn't cost too much. Aio is an Italian restaurant that offers aperitivo for dinner. Aperitivo means you just buy drinks at a slightly higher price and are able to eat from the buffet at your heart's content. The food is typical Italian with pizza, pasta and salads on offer. Aperitivo is incredibly popular in Italy since the crisis hit, as a way to entice consumers to leave their homes. You cannot reserve a table but there's always a positive atmosphere.

Best time: 20-22h

Alternative: la Mucca is an excellent restaurant. You can make reservations and also sit outside on the terrace. It is the

more high quality and expensive option.

Metro: Tribunal/Gran Via/Callao

[Facebook](#)

**Act Three:** [Microteatro](#) por dinero in Calle de Loreto Prado y Enrique Chicote, 9



What surprise will await?

You then continue the night by going to Micro Teatro, a bar where you can watch a small theatrical performance for only €4. You can enjoy drinks upstairs and then when your number is called out, you will descend the stairs into the basement and go into the designated room. All groups are at most 15 people and you come face to face with the actors in the small room. Each little play lasts around 15 minutes, which is good because not all are great. It never fails to create another conversation and even if you only understand 50%, it will still be entertaining.

Best time: 22-24h

Alternative: [Bar Lambuzo](#): an Andalusian tavern offering Micro

Teatro every Thursday night from 9pm-11pm in their downstairs wine cellar (21h-23h if you will J!), with sessions every half hour for 4€ (more information in a [previous article](#))

Metro: Tribunal/Gran Via/Callao

**The Final Act:** [El Perro de la parte de atras del coche](#) (or just el Perro) in Calle de La Puebla, 15,



Once you still have energy and need a club, I recommend El Perro, which is around the corner. This club is free entry before 24h, otherwise entry is €10. The music varies a lot. Not a huge dancing room means even if it is not packed will have you feeling like enough people are present.

Best time: after 24h

Alternative: Wind down with a cocktail instead of some dance moves at [1862 Dry Bar](#) in Calle Pez 27, which is open to 1.30am and until 2am on weekends. The martini like many of their cocktails is thoroughly worth it.



Metro: Tribunal/Gran Via/Callao



For other great date ideas in Madrid, check out these off-the-beaten-path cultural centres, restaurants and bars!

- [El Matadero](#), a slaughterhouse turned cultural hub
- [Bar Lambuzo](#), a family-run Andalusian tavern in the centre of Madrid offering activities in their wine cellar, from wine tastings to microteatro!
- [La Paca](#), the perfect Malasaña bar & café offering movie nights, art, markets, music and Chema!
- [Mercado de Motores](#), Madrid's coolest vintage & food

*market that takes over the city's old train museum once a month!*

- [La Buena Cerveza](#), an international and imported beer shop in Madrid offering beer tastings, workshops and more...
- [Beer State of Mind](#), go on a route to discover Madrid's best craft beer bars, you'll love them all ☐
- [Martinis, Margaritas and More](#), where to get the best cocktails in Madrid...

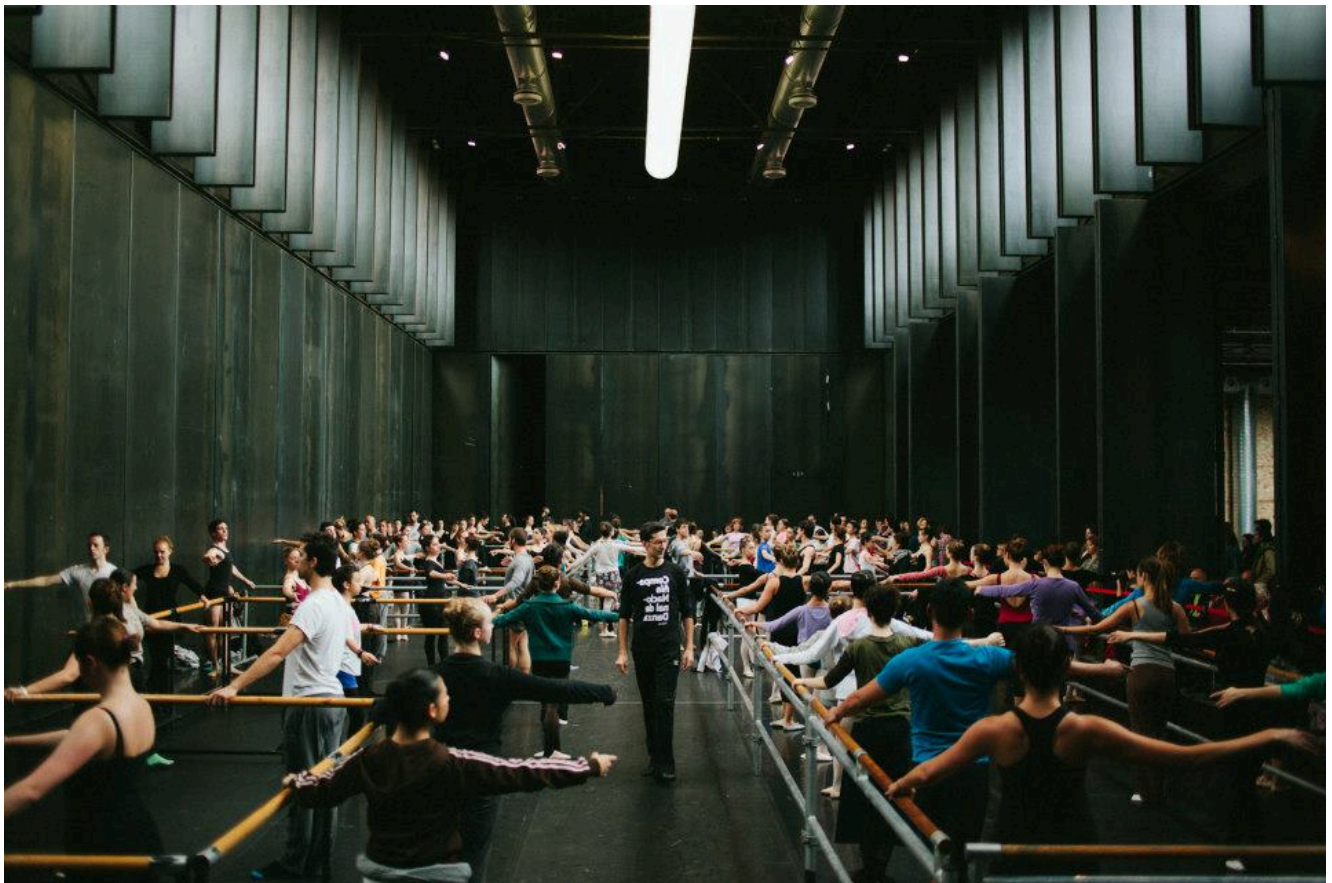
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## **El Matadero, a slaughterhouse turned phenomenal cultural hub**

If you're looking for something as impressive as the Prado or the Reina Sofia, but off-the-beaten-path, it's [El Matadero](#). The perfect place to spend a leisurely afternoon alone or with friends in Madrid, here you can calmly diddle daddle through a maze of **art exhibits** and **designer market stands**. Then, enjoy a *café con leche* or a cold Madrid brew outside. **El Matadero** has it all—from Spain's national dance company performances to international innovation conferences.

## What is it?

Just a 10-minute subway ride from Sol, **El Matadero** is a culture/innovation hub and architectural treasure. The **former slaughterhouse** (hence, the name) is now a public-private entity offering book-readings, theater and music performances, photography exhibits and independent cinema on a nightly basis, most of which are **free**.



on día internacional de la danza, image from Matadero's Facebook page

Not to be compared with any other space in the city, **El Matadero** is an ambitious project and the fruit of a most innovative and modern Madrid. **This cultural center** also provides ongoing activities for families as well as a space for local innovators to develop their projects, all of which you can see while wandering through its enormous labyrinth of warehouses (naves) and open work spaces.





There are six *naves*, each used for a different purpose. For example, the **Nave Español** holds theater and dance performances. The **Cineteca** showcases international and independent film festivals. The **Música Nave** holds concerts and recording studios.



The **old oven** has now been usurped by the café, **La Cantina**, that sells locally produced food and wines, and has the kind of atmosphere that makes you want to stay forever. Plus, it has one of the **best terrazas** (outdoor seating areas) in all of Madrid, in my opinion at least.





When the weather's nice, my husband and I like to go there by bike; it's a breezy 30-minute ride from *Principe Pio* along Madrid's river (*Madrid Río*), which the city has done an amazing job of revamping. The river is now lined with bike and pedestrian paths, unique bridges, playgrounds (for grown-ups too!), street workout equipment, sprawling green zones and sprinkler areas. Plus it's a straight shot to **El Matadero**.





Last summer I took my sister, Amanda, from New York, to **El Matadero** for the whole afternoon. We first slipped into what used to be the slaughterhouse's fridge area, where an odd fire exhibit was being showcased. When we stepped out onto the courtyard, a group of flamenco dancers were *zapateando* (stomping) and smoking in a circle, getting ready to go on stage in the **Nave Español**. Then we parked ourselves at **La Cantina** for a glass of wine and a plate of delicious vegetable dishes made from **Madrid's local gardens**.

Amanda was amazed how all of this was so open to the public, and that it wasn't even packed. She said that if this were to be opened in Brooklyn, lines would be stretching to Queens.

## History

**El Matadero** was built in the 1920s as a pig slaughterhouse, and was turned into a cultural center in 2006. When they renovated the slaughterhouse, the goal was to keep the original columns, the beams, the ovens and exterior structure in tact. For example, the first room you see on the left of the entrance used to be the freezer. Now it's an exhibition space. The dark, sinister feel makes you ponder what really went on in there. The interior was designed to be versatile and sustainable – most of the walls can be rolled away or folded up to make way for projects and events of all scale.

## What to do?

Even if you're in Madrid for a few days, don't be intimidated by the amount of things going on. I highly recommend checking out their [activities list](#) (which is in English) or just stopping by to see the architecture and the vibe. As you stroll through the different spaces, you'll stumble upon anything from an indoor garden to a conference on new technology. Activities are open to the public in the afternoon, and you're free to walk around the plaza, find a nook to study in or have a drink at the café anytime.



## What's new?

Since October 2013, El Matadero has its own independent market—[El Mercado Central de Diseño](#).



El Matadero's monthly market—[El Mercado Central de Diseño](#)—is one of Madrid's first design markets for entrepreneurs in the worlds of fashion, design and arts & crafts. During the two-day market, various free **music concerts** and **events** are put on as well, making it a **hot spot** to go with friends on the weekend!





**Information:**

**El Matadero**

**Facebook**

**Where:** Paseo de la Chopera 14 Metro: Legazpi (line 3, yellow)

**Hours:** Tuesday to Friday from 4pm to 10pm Saturday to Sunday from 11am to 10pm

**Telephone:** 915 17 73 09