

# Best Cafe-bookshops in Madrid, Round 2!

Welcome to round two of the [best cafe-bookshops in Madrid](#)! As you may have noticed in [round one](#), Madrid's central neighborhoods boast quite a lot of quaint coffee shops and bars that encourage drinking and reading under one roof.

There's something about drinking coffee or wine amidst a sea of books that makes me feel right at home. Whether you're looking for the perfect place to enjoy a quiet conversation or a good read, here are five more wonderful cafe-bookshops in Madrid that you're bound to fall in love with.

## 1. La Central de Callao



La Central (featured in the cover photo) is a trendy bookshop near Callao and hands down the most modern of all on this list. It boasts three floors, a happening café with a full menu and a selection of much more than books on offer. At La Central, you can also find funky mugs, quirky bags, useful calendars, board games, wrapping paper, you name it. It's a great place to get [gifts in Madrid](#).

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** C/ Postigo de San Martín, 8
- **Metro:** Callao

## 2. J&J Books and Coffee





A long-time staple among Madrid's expat community, this corner bar has a downstairs bookstore selling a large selection of primarily used English-language books, including ESL resources. Up at the bar, you can get craft beer, wine, coffee, bagels and other things to munch on. Also check out J&J's free events, including language exchanges and pub quizzes (trivia nights). Lots of fun!

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** c/ Espíritu Santo, 47
- **Metro:** Noviciado

### 3. italiana\_madrid





This Italian café and bookshop is located on one of Madrid's most vibrant streets – Corredera Baja de San Pablo – which is lined with great bars, cafes and restaurants, such as [Aió Pizzería](#), [Elemental Bistro](#) and [Gymage](#) with its rooftop terrace. At [italiana\\_madrid](#), you can get a strong espresso or Aperol Spritz, plus browse through a wide selection of Italian reads ranging from cookbooks to children's books. It's also across the street from one of the city's favorite theaters, Teatro Lara.

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Corredera Baja de San Pablo, 10
- **Metro:** Gran Vía

## 4. La Ciudad Invisible



A travel bookshop selling food and drinks, this two-level cafe boasts huge windows, high ceilings, and plenty of large tables, couches and comfortable armchairs to choose from, making it a great place for getting work done and meeting friends. Plus it sells a killer **Rebujito for 2€** (a really refreshing yet deceptive drink from the South containing sherry, white wine and soda water). It's also across the street from one of my favorite restaurants in Madrid, [Bar Lambuzo](#).

- [Facebook](#)

- **Address:** *c/ Costanilla de los Ángeles, 7*
- **Metro:** *Opera & Santo Domingo*

## [5. María Pandora](#)



María Pandora is one of my favorite spots in the city. Perched atop a hill overlooking Parque las Vistillas, behind the Royal Palace, here you'll find the perfect place to watch the sunset while enjoying a glass of champagne (the house specialty) or your drink of choice. Although María Pandora is more of a bar than a coffeeshop, it still deserves a spot on this list of literary cafés. It also holds events such as [poetry nights](#), microtheater, and book readings. [Check out our full article on María Pandora here.](#)

- [Website & Facebook](#)
- **Phone:** +34 910 42 82 13



- **Address:** Plaza de Gabriel Miró, 1
- **Metro:** La Latina or Ópera

## **Make sure to read: “[Best Cafe-Bookshops in Madrid, Round 1](#)”**

Also check out our [favorite bookshop in the city, Desperate Literature](#)

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## **Madrid’s Best Christmas Markets 2014!**

Madrid’s *navideño* spirit is as bright and festive as in any other European capital. Rows of lights down Paseo de la Castellana, *chocolate con churros* on New Year’s Day, the Three Kings’ parade... But before all that, there are the Christmas markets setting up all over the city and stocking their stalls with handcrafted wares, jewelry, gourmet delicacies and [unique gift ideas](#) from independent designers. Here are some of the **best Christmas markets** to mark in your calendars and flock to when you start your holiday shopping:

### **The Hovse:**



image from [el club express](#)



image from [La Vermutería](#)

For the curious and nosy ones out there, an excuse to peek into a beautiful Madrileño home seems too good to be true. After the success of last year's pop-up market, 'The

Apartment', this year brings '[The Hovse](#)' – one house, three floors, and 80 designers selling one-of-a-kind creations. There's also a bar on the top floor run by pop-up [La Vermuteria](#) – a great excuse for those who aren't into shopping but want to tag along anyway. Now open until 24 December.

*Calle General Arrando 40*

*Check out our [events page](#) for more details.*

## **Mercado de Motores:**





Hosted in the old train museum, 'Museo de Ferrocarril', this market takes place in between old tracks and steam engines. Vintage clothing, a live band, artisanal products and trendy crowds are all to be found. The next and last running weekend for this market is the 20-21 December.

*Paseo de las Delicias 61*

*Also check out our full post on [Mercado de Motores](#)*

**Nomada Market:**





There is something of a recent trend in transforming train stations into markets. [Nomada](#) is a great place to find original creations and craftsmanship from emerging designers, alongside DIY workshops; all below the glass ceiling of Madrid's Chamartin train station. Pull out the sweater Grandma gave you last year and join in on National Ugly Christmas Sweater day for the market's funniest [Christmas edition](#), which only lasts for a few days. 12-14 December.

*Attic of Estacion de Chamartin, Calle Agustín de Foxa*

*Check out our [events page](#) for more details.*

## **La Industrial:**



A tiny market in comparison to the rest, but a great place to hunt for gifts you won't find anywhere else. From hand-made bags printed with the map of the world to note books bound in Japanese origami paper, this Malasaña market is not one to miss when shopping for that quirky, special friend. Throughout December.

*Calle San Andres 8*

## **Ciento y Pico:**



image from [Ciento y Pico](#)

Now in its fifth year, Ciento y Pico unites over 30 small, local brands under one roof to sell their handmade crafts, original jewelry, vintage goods, or home decor worthy of any hipster's haven. 18 – 21 December

*Calle Velarde 14*

## **Madrid Diferente:**





One of Madrid's most established city-guide blogs is branching out into retail and hosting its own **Christmas pop-up**. With the name 'Diferente Market' we can only imagine that it will be stocked full of curious knick-knacks and unusual gift items. It will run over two weekends: 11-14 December and 18-21 December.

*Calle San Vicente Ferrer 33*

## 1001 Atmosphaera:

# Le marché de Noël

VENTA ESPECIAL DISEÑADORES Y CREADORES  
CAMPAÑA DE NAVIDAD

27, 28, 29 Y 30 NOVIEMBRE  
C/ General Pardiñas, 50  
Madrid

Jueves de 17:00h a 21:00h  
Viernes y sábado de 11:00h a 21:00h  
Domingo de 11:00h a 15:00h



[www.1001atmosfera.com](http://www.1001atmosfera.com)

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- ✧ PEPPERONI BAND ✧ PETITSUI ✧ POSTCARD ✧ SAYAN ✧ SIETE PECAS ✧
- ✧ TABATA GLAM ✧ THE MUST HAVE ✧ TIENDAS BY GIFT ✧
- ✧ TRES SIETE ✧ VINTAGE ✧ VOLVORETA CLOSET ✧
  
- ✧ EL RINCÓN DEL PIRINEO ✧ MA PETITE CREPERIE ✧

 fashion

COLUMNA  
ZERO

it-girl by Maria Casado

 maniviri

LUSSTRA

The pop-up gallery, [1001 Atmosfera](#), is holding three high-end Christmas Market editions. The first **Le Marché de Noël** will be held this weekend 27-30 November in honor of Black Friday! Among over 90 participating vendors, you'll find designer handbags, shoes, accessories and more from brands such as Eme-Ele, Letter&U and Molé Molé, as well as gourmet food stalls from the likes of [Ma Petite Creperie](#), BorchCakes and El Rincón del Pirineo. Don't worry if you can't make it out this weekend, because the market will return for two weekends in December: 11-14 December and 18-21 December.

*Calle General Pardiñas, 50*

## Plaza Mayor:



Image from [Blog Es Madrid](#)

One of the oldest and most well-known Christmas markets in the Spanish capital, we couldn't forgo mentioning it. Wooden huts take over Madrid's most prominent square for a month to sell Christmas decorations, live trees, costumes and the elaborate Spanish nativity scenes. Worth a stroll through the crowds,

even if it's just for a bit of contagious holiday buzz. 28 November – 31 December

*Plaza Mayor*

## **Plaza Jacinto Benavente:**

Also known as the “Christmas Card Market” this mercadillo is best known for, what else, its elaborate Christmas cards, among other handicrafts. Traditional “casetas” are set up throughout the square to mimic a medieval town and there's also a bar serving not-so-traditional, crowd-pleasing mojitos. 28 November – 6 January

*Plaza Jacinto Benavente*

## **Navidad en Oriente:**

This “Feria Dulces de Navidad” sets up shop in front of the Royal Opera House and sells sweet Spanish delicacies. Turrón lovers rejoice! Right next to it is also an ice rink, which opens every holiday season with a view of the Royal Palace. 28 November – 6 January

*Plaza de Oriente*

by Ardena González from [a wanderer's path](#) blog

**If you're looking for unique gift ideas from Madrid, make sure to check out our post, [Best Gifts from Madrid](#), and our [Naked Madrid Events Page](#) to find out**

**about other markets and fun things going on in the city!**

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## **Let's visit the wine region, Ribera del Duero, from Madrid!**

We all know that we owe a lot to the Romans- the feats of engineering, the inventions, the creation of basic law, the art. But in the case of Ribera del Duero, we owe them the discovery of the perfect place to grow the tempranillo grape, and the beginnings of the Ribera del Duero wine region.

Do you like full-bodied red wines, exploring ancient ruins and travelling through stunning landscapes? Then Ribera del Duero could be your next destination. To give you a head start, here are some useful tips from inside the wine industry, including where the region is, why it is famous, my favourite winery and how to get there from Madrid.

### **The scoop**

Ribera del Duero is talked about as being one of the most prestigious wine regions in Spain. It is renowned for its **full-bodied, elegant and complex red wines**, which are of an **extremely high quality** (the region's regulatory body only allows a certain amount of grapes to be produced per harvest-meaning that quality is in, and quantity is out).

In fact, in 2012 Ribera won a Wine Star award for being the **best wine region in the entire world** (which in the wine world

is the equivalent to winning the Oscars).

## Roman Gods and Medieval fortresses

Ribera del Duero became an official D.O. (Designation of Origin) region in 1982, but wine has been produced here for **over 2,000 years**. We know for sure that the Roman people of Ribera del Duero made wine, because they left behind mosaics of the Roman God of wine, Bacchus.

Bacchus was, amongst other things, the youthful, beautiful and (somewhat) androgynous God of harvest, wine and general all-round debauchery (he was actually the half mortal son of Zeus, so who can blame him). You can still see a 66 metre mosaic tile floor dedicated to him and his frivolous escapades at the *Baños de Valdearados*, a small pueblo right in the centre of Ribera del Duero.



*The Ancient Romans believed that wine was a 'daily necessity' and produced wine in Ribera del Duero for everyone in society- men, women, slaves, aristocrats and peasants*

In fact, Ribera del Duero gets its entire name from the Romans and their love of wine; they were also so thankful for the blessing of the river on their vineyards, that they personified the river as Durius, a River God (who, we can only assume, was working in cahoots with Bacchus).

Ribera del Duero continued to make wine long after the Romans left- all throughout the Visigoth, Muslim, Christian and medieval eras, right up until today. This means that Ribera del Duero not only has beautiful vineyard landscapes shaped by thousands of years of wine making, but also a winemaking tradition as old as the Coliseum.

If you are interested in medieval history or have a penchant for fairy-tale architecture, Ribera del Duero also has an incredible collection of Middle Age castles. On my last trip, I visited the official 'National Monument' of the castle of Peñafiel, which is located where all good castles are- on top of a hill.





The castle of Peñafiel

## **Geography**

Ribera del Duero is a long and narrow wine region shaped to follow the path of the Duero river. Ribera del Duero is effectively an extended area of vineyard river bank, which is why the word 'Ribera' (river bank) is used in its name.



The Ribera del Duero the wine region includes parts of **four regional territories**– covering the south of Burgos, extending west into Valladolid and encompassing sections of Segovia in the south and Soria to the east.

There are 4 main municipalities: Peñafiel, Roa, Aranda del Duero and San Esteban de Gormaz. These are surrounded by rural areas of vineyards and wineries, churches, castles and beautiful valleys.

## My favourite winery

There are almost 300 wineries spread over the river banks of Ribera del Duero, a combination of hundred-year-old traditional family wineries and modern corporate giants, but for me, the winery [Pago de Carraovejas](#) is a real diamond- a shining example of how to keep Ribera del Duero's wine traditions alive, but not be afraid of modern innovation.

Back in the 1970's, a curious young sommelier José María Ruíz had a dream that he would one day own his own restaurant, where he would serve Segovia's most traditional dish, 'cochinillo' (roast baby piglet), which would be paired with his own Ribera wine.

Years later, and just 3km outside Peñafiel, Ruíz's impressive winery is in the perfect location in a sunny valley, protected by the hills from the North Wind and close enough to the river.



*The vineyards of Pago de Carraovejas in its special valley this summer 2014, with views of Peñafiel castle in the distance*

On my last trip to Ribera, I took part in the unveiling of Pago de Carraovejas' new wine tasting technique: the peeling and tasting of the skin, pulp and seeds of the grape before tasting the wines. This is a prime example of Carraovejas' innovative approach to wine and ability to think outside of the box, as is their research with Universities to create their own natural yeasts and bacteria specific to the land.



*Pago de Carraovejas in winter, photograph taken by my colleague and wine expert Raul Buendía. As the seasons change, so do the landscapes- with so many vineyards, each season brings unique stunning views*

If you tour their winery, not only will you taste their fantastic red wines throughout the tour in different winemaking rooms (a refreshing take on the traditional end-of-tour wine tasting), but you will also get to enjoy 3 delicious tapas dishes (including 'cochinillo') that have been carefully elaborated in Ruiz's dream restaurant to pair with the wines.



*One of the delicious tapas served in the barrel room on my last visit- a tuna, sautéed pepper and vegetable stack, with edible flower*

If you have a food allergy, Pago de Carraovejas are up to the job. They can adapt their tasting menu to gluten free and lactose free diets if you let them know in advance- and they will even serve gluten free bread. You might also want to let them know if you don't want to eat 'cochinillo' (baby piglet fed only milk and slaughtered at 15-20 days old), if you are a vegetarian, vegan or have certain meat eating beliefs.

## **Which wineries?**

To see a list of all of the wineries registered in the region, go to the official [Ribera del Duero D.O.](#) website.

If this seems too overwhelming and you aren't sure which winery to pick, or how to organise numerous visits that fit

together, you could organise a [wine tour of Ribera del Duero](#) from Madrid. You could even visit a winery that produces one of your favourite wines!

## How to get there

Ribera del Duero has so many places to visit that you could leave Madrid in a number of different directions, depending on where you are headed. Here are two routes to the wine towns Peñafiel and Aranda de Duero.

### By car:

I would recommend travelling to Ribera del Duero by car so that you can see Ribera's landscapes as you travel up from Madrid. This is all part of seeing Ribera- the land, the vineyards, castles and landscapes have all been shaped by wine making. You will also have the freedom to move about the region once you are there- you could stay in a wine town and drive to rural wineries and castles during the day, returning to eat delicious local food in the town at night.

You can see which companies rent cars in Madrid by going to our previous [Travelling by car in Madrid: renting cars, car sharing or carpooling](#) article.

**Route:** Madrid- Peñafiel

**Duration:** 2 hours approx.

**Tip:** Combine this route with a stop at the beautiful UNESCO city of Segovia on the way

**Route:** Madrid- Aranda de Duero

**Duration:** 1 hour 45 approx.

**Tip:** You can find recommended Aranda de Duero scenic driving routes for once you have arrived in the area, on the official [Aranda y Ribera guide](#) website. Useful for a weekend trip.

### By bus:

It is possible to travel to a few of the wine towns by coach

from Madrid. This would be a good option if you would just like to visit the main wine towns.

**Route:** Madrid- Peñafiel

**Depart from:** Moncloa

**Duration:** 3 hours approx.

**Price:** 17,00 approx. single

**Company:** The official Peñafiel website cites travelling with [La Sepulvedana](#)

**Route:** Madrid- Aranda de Duero

**Depart from:** Avenida de America

**Duration:** 2 hours

**Price:** 12,00€ approx. single (24,00€ approx. return)

**Company:** [Alsa](#)

## **Wine word for your trip**

**El sarmiento**– the little young, green vine shoot

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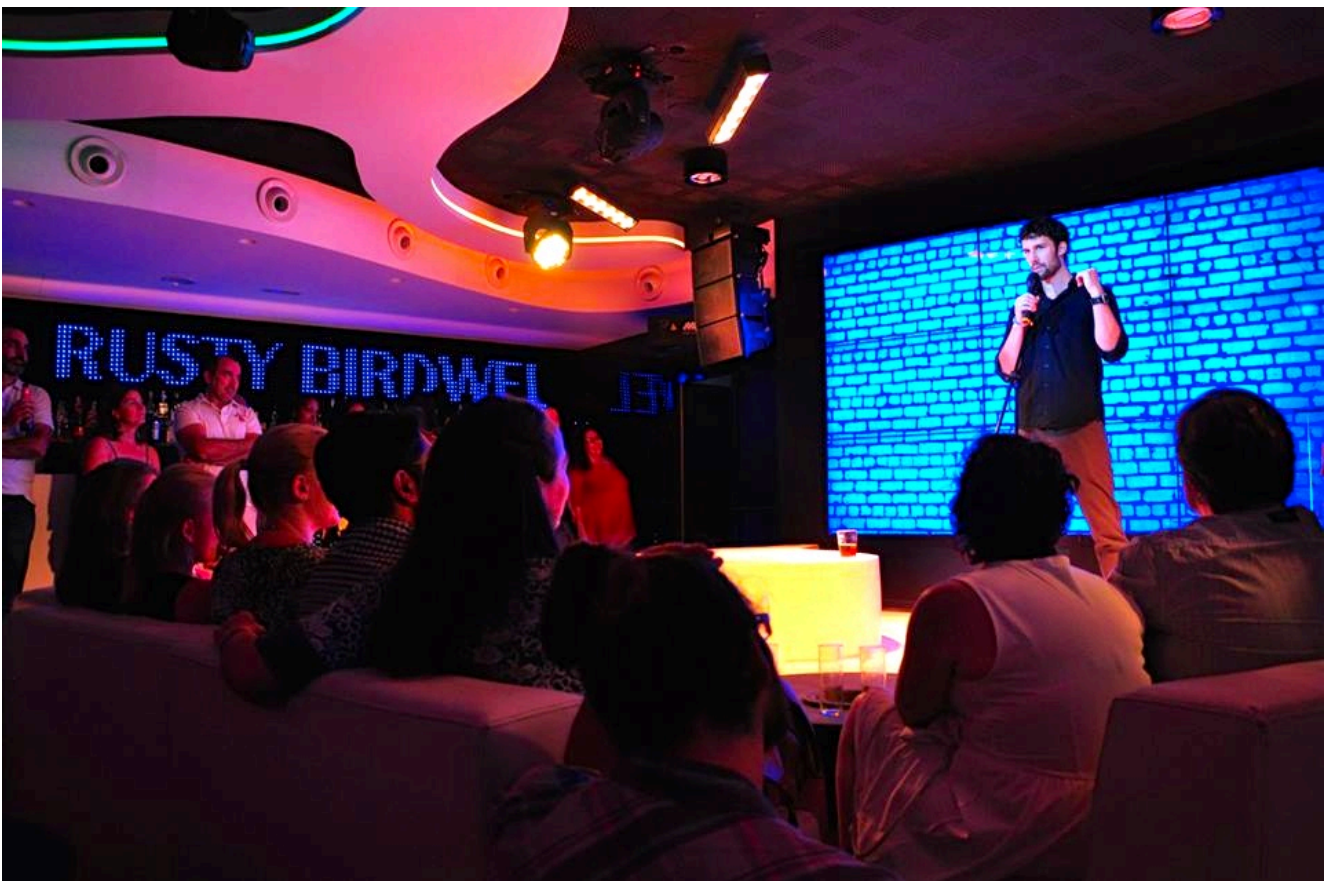
# **Madrid's action-packed English-language comedy scene, interview with Josh and Rusty**

Thanks to a whirlwind of stand-up comedy shows, improv groups and international festivals, you can enjoy live comedy in English in Madrid every week! This year alone, the city hosted an international comedy competition and received a visit from the world-famous stand-up comedian, Eddie Izzard, himself.

## So, how do I find out about shows and get up on stage?

You can check out our [calendar](#) for upcoming events, but first, get to know the city's three main English-language comedy groups:

1. **Ace Comedy Factory** was founded by Joshua Saxon (from London) and Rusty Birdwell (from Tennessee) last March with monthly open mic comedy showdowns at [Triskel Tavern](#) in Malasaña. They've also launched an event called "Comedy Super Team, Go!" which Josh calls the "*best of*", as they perform their most polished sets and feature comedians such as Archie Bezos and Kirk Bonacci.



Rusty on stage at Comedy Super Team, Go! at [Ancora](#)

2. **Freshly Comedy** prides itself on being Madrid's first English-language comedy group. It has two different shows: "*Freshly Squeezed*" (45 min stand-up/45 min improv) and



“Freshly Baked” (90 min pure improv). At all of these events, expect lots of drinks, jokes and games, plus audience participation...



Freshly Comedy – doing what could only be improv – at [Beer Station](#)

3. **MAD Improv** is an English improv group that meets every Saturday afternoon. The first three weekends of the month are free, while the last is a 4-hour masterclass given by Benjamin Nathan-Serio, costing €25. Anyone can join; you don't have to be a native speaker or have any previous experience. In fact, one Spanish woman joined because she had to do public speaking in English at work. (check out their [meetup group](#))



improv workshops in English near Puerta de Toledo on Saturdays from 4:30-7:30pm

## Inside scoop on Madrid's English-language comedy scene

To give you a roadmap, I sat down with Josh and Rusty, the guys who founded [Ace Comedy Factory](#) and collaborate with [Freshly Comedy](#). Rusty is one of the leaders of [MAD improv](#) and Josh organized this year's [Festival Internacional de la Comedia \(FIC\)](#), which featured an outstanding line-up including Reginald D. Hunter, one of the UK's best known comedians whose 200-seat show sold out. The festival also included the [Funniest FICer competition](#), Spain's premiere English-language comedy competition held in Madrid and Barcelona, plus a free inaugural event in Retiro – [The Big Comedy Picnic](#) – in which eighty people set up picnics on the grass.



seen at The Big Comedy Picnic in Retiro

## First impressions

When I first met Rusty, I asked him how he got his name. His answer: "Well, my parents just couldn't decide. My father wanted to call me Chainsaw and my mother, Butterfly!" It turned out this was an "elevated truth", a tactic both Rusty and Josh use in their sets.



doing improv I assume...

Oh, and Josh likes to be called Batman if possible. He likes bats.



the batman of comedy indeed

Sitting down with Rusty and Batman for coffee at [La Ciudad Invisible](#) felt like a behind-the-scenes glimpse into their free-style warm-up; the shenanigans that go on when they hang out together often lead them to come up with their best lines.

## **What's the crowd like?**

They get a lot of regulars and people from all over the world. One of the regular comedy-goers, Amy Flippant, from the UK, said: "I remember thinking it was cool to see so many nationalities and accents [on stage] in one event. There were Brits, Americanas, Canadians, and Spaniards, so it's very welcoming." She also witnessed all sorts of comedy, from loud and slapstick to very very surreal (especially at the picnic), and lots of first-time performers, too.

## Why do you think Madrid has such a widely popular comedy scene in English?

Both Josh and Rusty agreed that the amount of stuff going on is quite unexpected. It shows the city's welcoming nature as well as the power of Madrid's expat community to start new things. Unlike cities like New York and London, there's little competition for English comedy in Madrid; it's a niche market here. What started out with a few English-language comedy nights a month has since turned into an action-packed micro-culture of stand-up and improv groups that are at it all year long. Not to mention the many English-language theater groups. That's a whole other story...

## How did you get into comedy?

Both are pretty new to comedy. For Josh, who has a background in Journalism, it was always on his bucket list. On a whim, he participated in the [FICer Competition](#) last year and has been hooked ever since. Rusty calls Josh "super multi-talented," as he's not only a comedian and host, but also handles the web, organization and PR for many events. Rusty grew up doing theater and improv, and some film acting, although he stopped when he went into writing. While living in Madrid, he got the urge to get back into it and began organizing [Ace Comedy Factory](#) with Josh last February.

## Do you get nervous?

"Yeah, of course," said Josh. He's had a few tense moments on stage, but it's part of the game. "I compare it to getting punched in the face. Once it's happened, you can stand up for yourself." Rusty followed with a quote he had recently heard: "The master has failed more times than the beginner has ever tried."

# Their advice for anyone who wants to start something new in Madrid

“Go for it!”

Images from [Ace Comedy Factory](#), [MAD Improv](#), [Freshly Comedy](#) and [Madrid International Comedy Festival](#)

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## Where to swim in winter in Madrid: top 3 and much more.

Where can you jump off a 10-meter high springboard in olympic style? Play waterpolo? Or swim laps? Look no further, cause we're about to tell you...

Summer is technically over in September, yet that doesn't mean the pool fever has to stop. Quite the opposite, actually, as winter is the perfect time to suit up your speedo, dive into the water, take a deep breath and start moving like a dolphin (or a shark) in the pool. And the best part is that you can do all this without having to share your pool lane with a thousand people.

Madrid boasts many state-of-the-art sports complexes with indoor pools around the city, allowing you to splash around all year long. Whether you like the front crawl, backstroke, butterfly, breaststroke or even just floating

around and enjoying the silence (my favorite style), you'll be able to do it all. What's more, you can also partake in water sports like **waterpolo**, **scuba-diving** or, the coolest option, **springboard jump!**

So lets go dive into Madrid, shall we?

## Real Canoe



The club was established in the 1930's. Since then, it's been a home to all kinds sports like rugby, basketball, squash, football, and of course, water sports such as swimming, synchronized swimming or waterpolo. Today you have many different ways to enjoy the place, from becoming a full member to having the swim pass to enjoy your favorite sport. They've also got a **scuba-diving club!**

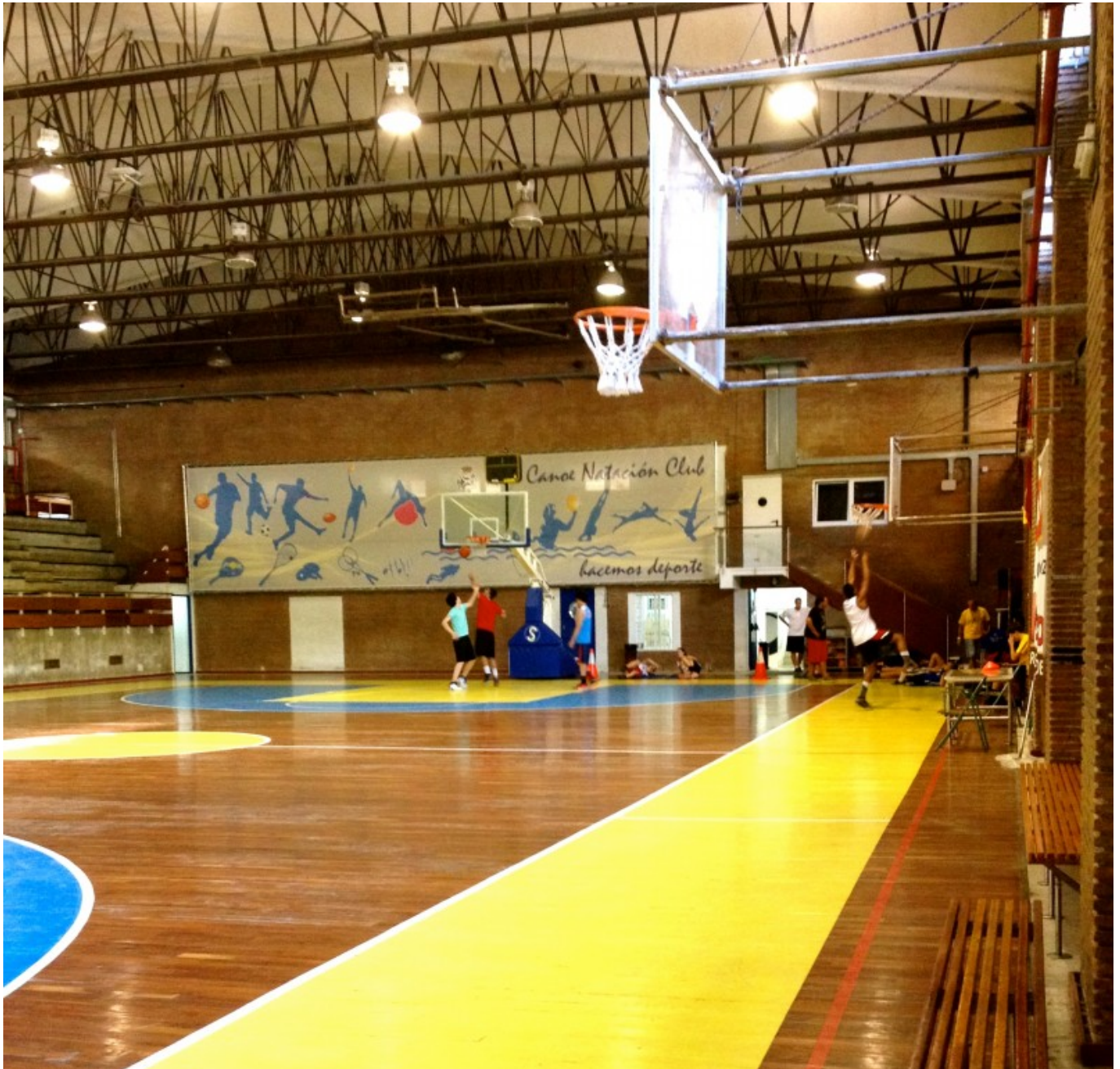


## Facilities

- 2 main pools
- Basketball court or multisport center
- A few squash and *pádel* courts
- Fully equipped gym
- Cafeteria







## Fees

They have a few options and ways to enjoy their facilities, but these are the main ones:

**A) Full Canoe membership.** This option is really good if you are planning on staying in Madrid long term.

- Schedule from **7am to 9.55pm (everyday – no limitations)**
- It costs **500€ (one time fee) + 97,52 € every two months.** Although it can be expensive to become a full member, sometimes they offer promotions, such as by

waiving the initial fee or reducing the membership fee

**B) Free use of pool in Canoe.** They have more options but these are the ones I would get:

▪ **Schedule**

- Mondays to Fridays.....7am-4pm (option 1)
- Saturday and Sunday.....8pm-9.55pm (option 2)

▪ **Fees**

- 1 month.....62€ (option 1) | 50€ (option 2)
- 2 months.....101€ (option 1) | 77€ (option 2)
- 3 months.....150€ (option 1) | 113€ (option 2)
- 4 months.....189€ (option 1) | 143€ (option 2)

\*For more options check out this [link](#) (only in spanish)

**Contact Canoe**

- **Adress:** *Calle Pez Volador, 30*
- **Neighborhood / District:** *Estrella, Retiro*
- **Tel:** *91 504 40 45*

**[Centro de Natación mundial 86](#)**



In the summer of 1986, Madrid was home to the World Aquatics Championships, therefore, the city built a complex to celebrate such an event. Today, thousands of Madrileños enjoy the facilities all year long; in the summer pools where you can spend the day swimming and having fun, and in the winter pools, where you can swim at your leisure or take affordable swimming lessons.

Here you will find a very special class: **Springboard jump**. No matter your age or level, [prepare to learn how to jump off a 10-meter high springboard in olympic style!](#) Continue reading for more details.

### **Facilities**

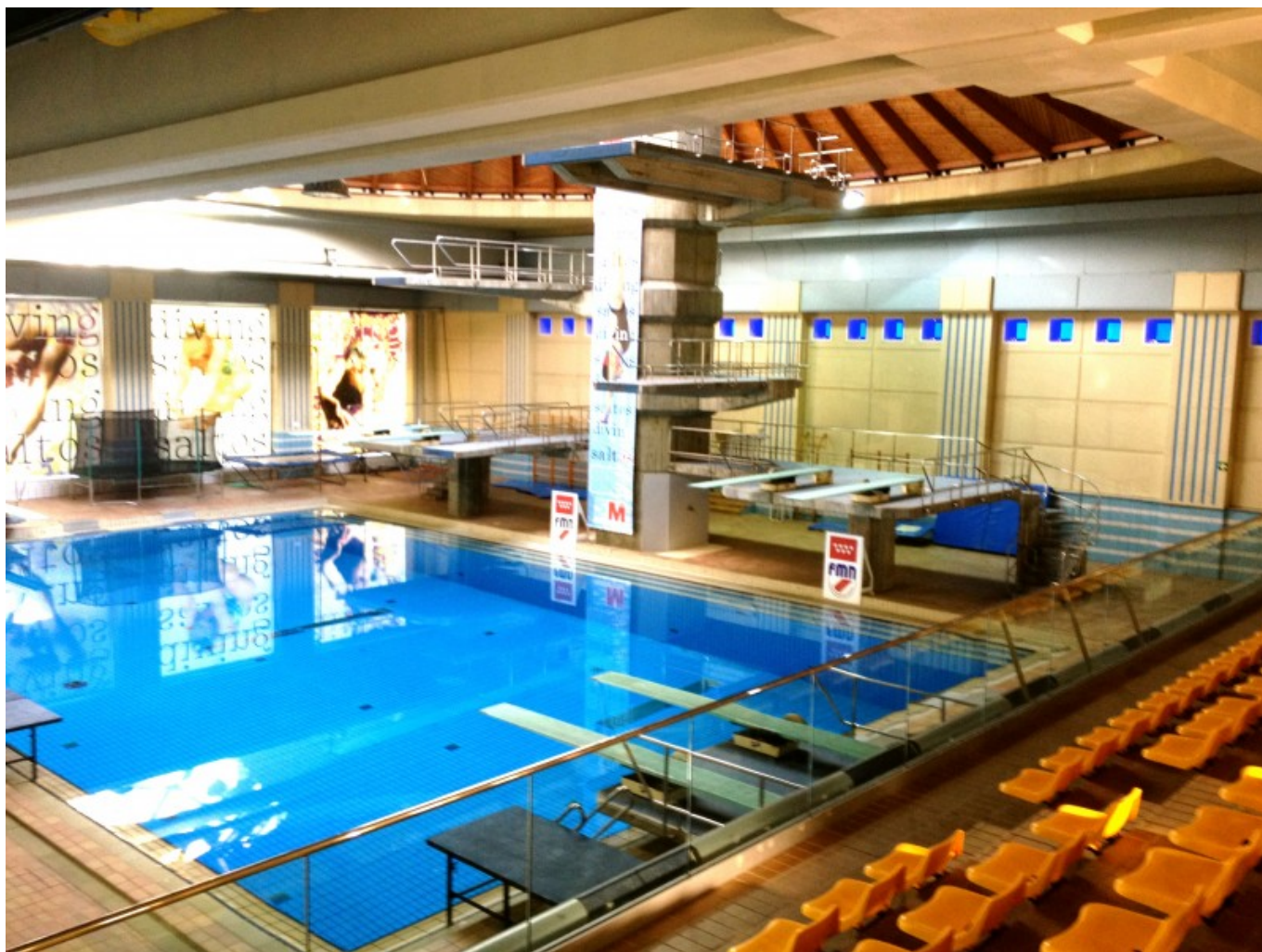
- Two olympic size pools (10 and 8 lanes)
- Springboard jump / diving pool

- Fully equipped gym
- Sauna

**1. High dive / springboard jump (max. 10 meters high). Main activities:**







What you have to know about the class:

▪ **Schedule:**

▪ Monday to Friday .....1.30pm-3.30pm

▪ **Price 60€ (10 hours per week)**

One-time trial class: **15€**

\*They are working on new schedules and rates, depending on how many people would like to join the class.

\*\*For more info, keep an eye on our [Facebook](#).

**Contact:** Álvaro 636 628 455 / alvaroprietolafuente@gmail.com  
(only Spanish)

**2. Free use of pool, Mundial 86.**





Here is what you should know:

▪ **Schedule:**

- Monday to Friday .....8.30am-10pm
- Saturday & Sunday..... 9am-1pm

▪ **Price**

- Abono club (Highly recommended) .....**43,15€/monthly fee**
- Other rates for less young people:
  - Senior (55 – 64 years old) 39,05€
  - 65 years old or more 22€

**Contact**

- **Adress:** *Calle José Martínez de Velasco, 3*
- **Neighborhood / District:** *Estrella, Retiro*

▪ **Tel:** 914 091 026 | 663 854 716

## **Some other options: Piscinas Municipales (Public Pools)**

If going to Estrella doesn't sound good to you, or you just want to go to the closest public sport center, there is also a wide variety of places where your swim. The one that I, along with many Madrileños, like the most, is [Escuelas de San Antón](#), which we mentioned in a previous post on the [Best Places to Break a Sweat in Madrid](#). Although you can also have a look at the list of [Madrid's public gyms](#) to find the most convenient center for you.

### **Centro Deportivo Municipal Escuelas de San Antón**



## Facilities

- Swimming pool
- Spa
- Gym

## Schedule

- Monday to Friday.....7am-10.30pm
- Saturday.....8am-8.30pm
- Sunday.....9am-6.30pm

[\\*All classes schedule](#)

## Fees

Monthly fee **47,45€**

\* [All fees list \(Spanish\)](#)

## Contacto

- **Adress:** *Calle Farmacia, 13*
- **Neighborhood / District:** *Justicia, Centro*
- **Tel:** *918 289 006*

## [Lista completa de Piscinas climatizadas pública](#)

**As you may already know, Madrid has a wonderful world of swimming pools that open up during summer. Here are my favorites:**

- [Madrid's Best Public City Swimming Pools](#)
- [Madrid's Best Natural Swimming Pools \(in the mountains\)](#)

**If you're looking for the best gyms and fitness clubs in Madrid, check out:**

- [Best Places to Break a Sweat in Madrid](#)

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# 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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## Best Places to Break a Sweat in Madrid

In addition to keeping fit, a big plus of joining a gym, dance class or fitness group in Madrid is getting to meet people – I honestly can't recommend a better way to make friends in the city, especially if you're no longer at university. And if you're only passing through Madrid for a short while, I still recommend dropping in on a dance class or going for an

organized hike or [bike ride](#), as a non-conventional way to get a feel for the city.

The best place to find out about group fitness activities is through [meetup.com](#). And if you want to go **cycling, running or swimming**, check out our previous posts: [Cycling in Madrid: A beginner's guide](#), [Exercise opportunities in Madrid](#) and [Where to swim in winter in Madrid](#).



**Now, here's a guide to Madrid's best gyms, dance and fitness clubs.**

Before signing up, we recommend taking a look at a few different gyms (they usually offer a free trial), considering which one is closest to your home, work or university, and trying to get a long-term contract (careful with this one, make sure you really like the place before you sign up).



# Madrid has three types of gyms and studios:

- (A) Public
- (B) Private (including dance & yoga studios)
- (C) Big Chains

Here are a few examples of our favorite places to keep fit, as well as useful links to find out about other options:

## A) Public GYMS

1. [Casa de Campo's public gym](#) has one of the best facilities in the city, especially for its swimming pools (winter and summer), which make this place perfect for pool lovers.

- [Official Madrid Site](#)
- **Address:** Pase Puerta del Angel, 7 (metros: Lago, Puerta del Ángel)

2. Another great swimming pool can be found in the heart of Chueca, at a public gym called [Centro Deportivo Municipal Escuelas de San Antón](#). Although this gym is small and does not have fitness classes, its glass-covered indoor pool is gigantic and the neighbourhood is unbeatable!

- [Official Madrid Site](#)
- **Address:** c/ Farmacia, 13 (metros: Chueca/Tribunal/Alonso Martínez/Gran Vía)

Madrid public GYM [full list](#) (in Spanish).

## B) Private GYMS, fitness clubs &

# groups. For something special

These private gyms are for those seeking something different, a friendly ambience and not-your-average fitness class. Here are my top three private gyms in Madrid, plus our recommended dance and yoga studios, and fun fitness groups.

**1. [Club Deportivo Metropolitano](#).** This one is really convenient for those who live close to Complutense University, as it has a huge variety of activities such as martial arts, boxing, capoeira, wall climbing, pilates, yoga, a pool and much, much more.

- [Website](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- **Facilities:** swimming pool, weight and fitness room, pilates & yoga room, martial arts room, boxing ring, climbing wall
- **Address:** Calle Aravaca, 7 (Metro: Guzmán el Bueno)

**2. [Centro el Horno](#).** My favourite spot in the city, “The Oven” is both a full dance studio and gym. At **Centro el Horno**, you will find every type of dance class under the sun, for both professionals and amateurs who just want to have fun in Madrid. Please stop by the **acrobatics** class, it will make your day! There’s also pole dancing, zumba, classical ballet, flamenco, crossfit, contemporary, hip-hop, you name it.

- [Website](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle Esgrima, 11 (Metro: Tirso de Molina)

**3. [CrossFit Krig](#).** I came here once and, literally, I couldn’t move my body after one session. You have to be really tough to keep going here. There is no gym in CrossFit Krig, instead you will find the most hardcore sports center—they only offer CrossFit, straight-up.

- [Website](#)

▪ **Address:** two locations:

- Cuatro Caminos: Calle Guipuzcoa, 11 (Metro: Cuatro Caminos)
- Retiro: Calle Vicente Caballero, 10 (Metro: O'Donnell or Sainz de Baranda)

\*Another gym recommended to me by others is [Soho Studio](#), great for cross-fit, pilates and all that, **near metro Bilbao**.

## **Recommended Dance Studios:**

### 1. [El Horno](#), for all dance styles (mentioned above)

- Although dance classes at El Horno are almost always open levels, meaning it's hard to find an advanced class, you'll find an amazing quantity of dance styles here and wonderful teachers. This is our favorite dance studio by far. Here you can really delve into new activities, from pole dancing and acrobatics, to classical ballet or hip hop.

### 2. [Amor de Dios](#), for the best flamenco dance classes

- Want to take a flamenco class in a studio that actually smells like flamenco? Well, this is your place! As you step inside the dance studio, which is situated atop a fish market, you will immediately feel the authentic flamenco vibe. It's the real deal.

### 3. [Karen Taft](#) & [Madrid Dance Center](#), for serious and more traditional dance classes

- If you're looking for high quality ballet, jazz, modern or contemporary dance classes, try either of these two studios, both of which offer a young professionals program and top instructors.

## Recommended Yoga Studios:

Madrid is full of yoga and pilates studios, thus finding the right one for you can be tricky. Luckily, most yoga studios offer a free first class or inexpensive trial week, so don't be afraid to drop in on a few different classes before picking your studio:

- For Yoga outdoors:
  - [Yoga at Retiro Park](#) has become very popular, and isn't limited to vinyasa. You can also find acroyoga and more. Check out the link.
- For Bikram Yoga, you can go to:
  - [Bikram Yoga Center](#): in the hip neighbourhood of Chueca.
  - [Bikram Yoga](#): in the hip neighbourhood of Malasaña (this web also offers info on workshops)
- For Ashtanga Yoga:
  - [Yoga at Espiritu 23](#): For a very inexpensive and good quality yoga class, you can go to a cultural center in Malasaña called Espiritu 23

## Recommended Fitness Clubs & Groups:

If you're not into the standard kind of workout, not to worry. You can join running groups in Retiro, weekend hiking groups to Madrid's mountains and even go rock climbing in the outskirts. The best place to find out about fun fitness groups is at [Meetup.com](#) (make sure to look under all the different categories: [health & well-being](#), [fitness](#), [sports & recreation](#), and [dance](#)). Here you can find long-boarding, salsa classes, yoga, everything!

Here are two clubs that I've heard particularly good things about, being great ways to get to know new people and the city:

### 1. Running Company Madrid:

- Organised running and training sessions starting near Atocha.
- Check out their [schedule](#) and different levels. [Facebook](#) and [Web](#)

## 2. Skating (Roller Blading)

- [Skating classes in Retiro and Madrid Rio](#), they also have free routes and activities.
- [Facebook Skating Meet-up Group](#) where people organize free meet-ups to skate around the city every day

## C) Big chains

As in any other city, you will find some of the big GYM chains. I personally don't find them to be that cool, but they do have great prices and some have swimming pools and passes that allow you access to various locations around the city. Here is a list of them:

- [Holiday Gym](#)
- [McFit](#)
- [Body Factory](#)
- [Centro Wellness](#) (the Manuel Becerra location has a huge pool)
- [Altafit](#)

## Also check out:

- [Cycling in Madrid: A beginner's guide](#)
- [Exercise opportunities in Madrid](#)
- [Where to swim in winter in Madrid](#)

What's your favorite place to keep fit in Madrid? Let us know so we can add it to this list!

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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 Sofia'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 Príncipe 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.

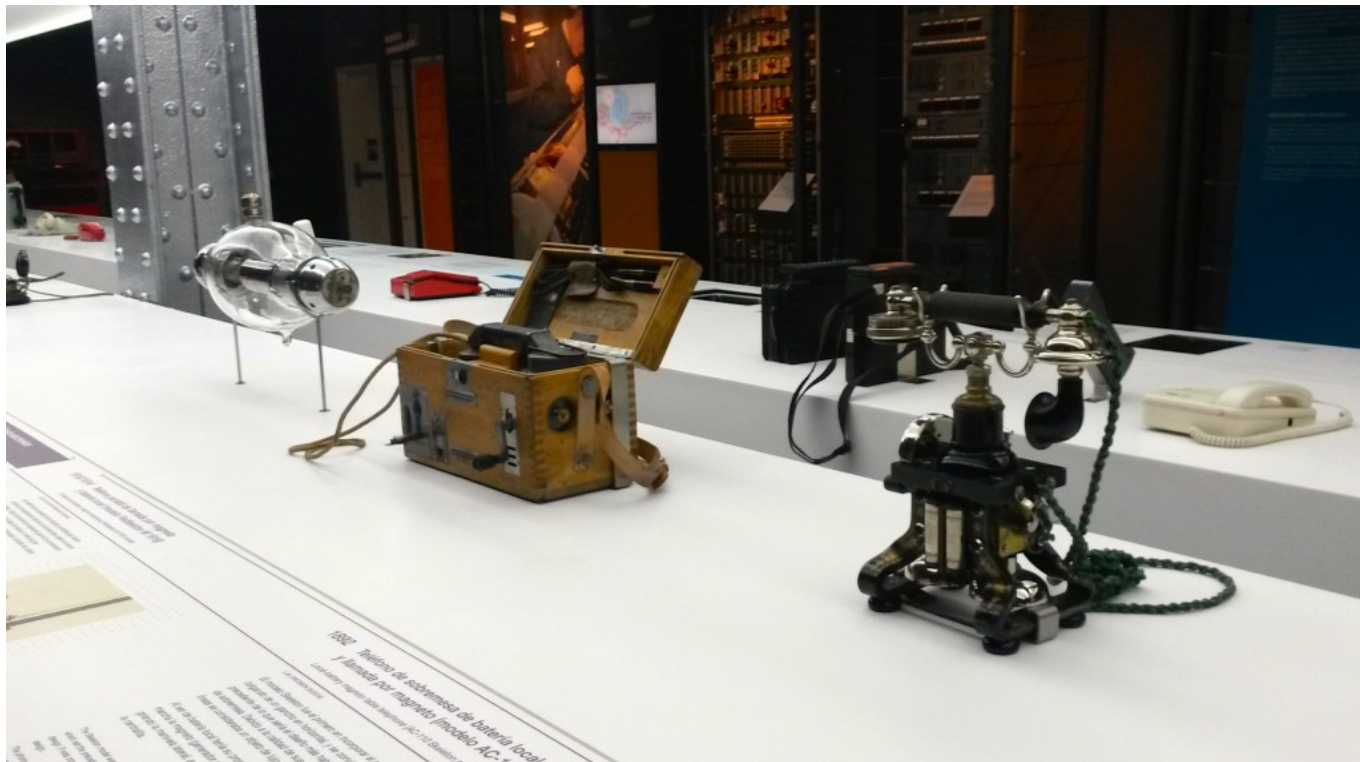
**Hours:** Tues-Sun from 10am-6pm. Guided tours begin every half hour and are available in Spanish, English and French. [Make a Reservation by](#) telephone (91 429 92 16) or email (casamuseolopedevega@madrid.org).

**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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## **4 Best City Biking Routes for Tourists in Madrid**

There is no such thing as the best city in the world (even though New Yorkers like to claim the title). From what I can see, however, Madrid is getting pretty close. You've probably noticed that Madrid's public bike system, [BiciMad](#), is fully up and running. Madrid's public bikes are **electric-powered** which is awesome because you barely break a sweat while going up the city's many hills. This also means that you can see Madrid's most emblematic buildings, plazas, parks and river all in one day, on two wheels.

Now that cycling in Madrid has been made easy, **here are four beautiful cycling routes in the city-center!** I've attached a **google map** with each route, but you really can't get lost. Combine these routes as you wish, as they're not too long and meant to be enjoyed, so you can feel free to wander off and explore. Happy cycling!!!

If you want to know how [BiciMad](#) works, check out our post:

[“Electric city bikes in Madrid, a city that’s turning bike-friendly”](#)

## 1. Atocha – Paseo del Prado – Recoletos



This first route starts at “*Ministerio de Agricultura*” or Ministry of Agriculture building. This tour is very easy to bike because the streets are flat and wide. There is also a pretty boulevard which goes all the way up Paseo del Prado and Castellana. You will see some of the main buildings in the city like the Prado Museum, Caixa Forum and the National Library. You’ll also pass through three of the most important and well-known squares (plazas) in Madrid: Neptuno, Cibeles and Colón.





Find the route on the map:

## **2. Cibeles – Alcalá – Retiro Park**





While New York and London have, respectively, Central Park and Hyde Park, we *Madrileños* have **Retiro Park**. Maybe it's not that famous or was never featured in a Hollywood production, but we are as proud as can be of our city's beautiful green oasis. The route through Retiro is also really easy to bike, however, you can start it at "*Plaza de la Independencia*", also known as Puerta de Alcalá, to make it even easier. In Retiro Park, you'll see some of Madrid's most stunning places such as "*Palacio de Cristal*" (main pic at the top) and "*Retiro Lake*" where you can rent a rowboat.





Find the route in the map:

### **3. Palacio – Casa de Campo**



What I like most about this route is that you get to leave the city for a while. We first start at the Madrid's Royal Palace and take a ride around to enjoy it in all its glory from front to back. Then, we head for "*Casa de Campo*", where there are always groups of mountain-bikers going up and down the park's infinite paths. If you're not familiar with Casa de Campo, it's much bigger than Retiro, and looks more like a forest– it has a great [public swimming pool](#) and lake where people do water sports. Of course, there are bars too. As for this route's level, I wouldn't say it's easy one but it's definitely doable. It all depends on how far you go into "*Casa de Campo*" .





Find the route in the map:

## 4. Matadero – Madrid Rio – Principe Pio



Just a few years ago, the **Manzanares River** was surrounded by an ugly highway. Thanks to Madrid's former mayor who spent who knows how much money on its renovation, now we are enjoying "*Madrid Rio*" to the max. Starting at **Principe Pio**, you will enter Madrid Rio to bike along different paths and stumble upon fun (and free) activities like a "*tirolina*" or zip-line, playgrounds (for adults too!) and one of Madrid's urban beaches, a.k.a. sprinklers, that we love when summer comes. Then you will end up at one of my favorite spots in the city, [Matadero Madrid](#), an old slaughterhouse which is now an awesome and free cultural center. Here is a link to our post on [El Matadero](#).







Find the route in the map:

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## **Electric City Bikes in Madrid, a city that's turning bike-friendly**

Madrid's public bike stations had been lonely for weeks, but yesterday morning we woke up to see the much-awaited electric bikes finally parked in their slots! So here's a look at all you need to know about getting tickets, finding stations and participating in Madrid's rising bike scene.

Although far from being comparable to Amsterdam, Madrid is in the midst of a fast transition towards becoming biker-friendly. In recent years, bike lanes have appeared on main streets such as **calle Alcalá** and **calle Mayor**. Community biking groups and blogs such as [En Bici Por Madrid](#), [Ecomovilidad](#) and [Ciclosfera](#) encourage city biking culture in Madrid by providing info on the best cycling routes, workshops and how to lock up your bike properly. [Bici Crítica](#) organizes a free meet-up on the last Thursday of every month at 8pm, when cyclists gather at **Plaza de Cibeles** for a pleasant ride around the city. Now the new **electric city bikes** should be another fun way to explore, get through traffic, and tackle those relentless hills!



### **What's BiciMAD?**

[BiciMAD](#) is an initiative launched by Madrid's **Ayuntamiento** (City Hall) to provide affordable, public rental of electric-powered bikes, allowing city-dwellers to move around Madrid on **eco-friendly wheels 24/7**. Electric-powered means there's a small engine that helps you pedal, especially when starting off or going up hills. The engine automatically shuts off when you reach a speed of 16km/hr. The first phase of the initiative consists of 1,580 bikes and 123 stations, in the following neighborhoods: Center, Retiro, Salamanca, Arganzuela

and Moncloa.

### Important links:

- [BiciMAD's web](#) and [facebook](#)
- [Madrid city's official info on BiciMAD](#)
- [Google map of all the electric bike stations](#)
- Interactive [map of Madrid for bikers](#), including calmest streets and bike paths

### How does it work?

All transactions—registration, payment, getting and charging your card, bike pick-up & drop-off, and reporting of problems—can be carried out at each **bike station**, where you will find a machine (**tótem**) with instructions in English and Spanish. What's more, you'll be able to check availability and routes on your mobile device: IOS, Android and Windows P, and download a handy **app**.

### How much does it cost?

Price depends on if you buy an annual pass (**abonado**) or not (**no abonado**).



For **abonados**, you will have to pay **25€/year** and only **15€/year** if you already have the monthly **abono transporte** (public train and bus pass), plus an additional cost per ride of 0,50€-0,60€ (see all rates above). For **no abonados**, also called *usuarios ocasionales*, rides up to an hour cost **2€-4€**.

*All rates include insurance. Sanctions are established for abuse or misuse.*

### How do you sign up & get your card?

Whether you're an **annual user** or an **occasional user**, you still need to sign up. Here are the steps:

## 1. Sign up to get your code:

- [Online](#)
- At any station's totem
- By phoning 010
- In person at Línea Madrid offices

## 2. With the code, pick up your card (*tarjeta*) and charge it at the station

\*As an annual user (*abono anual*), you're automatically part of the public bicycle club of Madrid ([Club de la Bicicleta Pública de Madrid](#)), a virtual forum for other biking fans to find out about events, workshops and exchange info.

### How do you use it?

- Once you're signed up and put money on your card at the station, you're ready to start riding.
- To pick up the bike, there should be a Green light indicating that the bike is available. Swipe/hold your card close to the light until you hear a beep. Then gently remove the bike from its slot.
- To drop off the bike, there should be a red light at the slot meaning it's empty. Push the bike in until the light turns green, hear a beep and *voilà!* Just make sure that the bike is stationed well by pulling at it slightly.
- If it's blue, that means that the spot has been reserved by another user.
- If there's no light, it means that it's disconnected and you can't use it.

### What happens if you return a bike and the station is full?

- Check in so you don't get penalized, and then you will be given 10 more minutes to go to the next station.

*\*We'll be updating this post as the new initiative sets in... stay tuned!*

And if you're looking to take these city bikes out for a spin, check out: [\*\*4 Best City Biking Routes in Madrid\*\*](#)