

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:

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**](#)