



Tour Information



Art and Culture in Madrid and Toledo





Passports

You may need to renew your British Passport if you are travelling to an EU country. Please ensure your passport is less than 10 years old (even if it has 6 months or more left on it) and has at least 6 months validity remaining from the date of travel. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and Swiss valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel.

For more information, please visit: [passport checker](#)

Visas

As a tourist visiting from the UK, you do not need a visa for short trips to most EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. You'll be able to stay for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

For further information, please check here: [travel to the EU](#)

For all other passport holders please check visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

Spanish consulate: 20 Draycott Place, London SW3 2RZ; Tel: 020 7589 8989, Fax: 020 7581 7888.

Open Mon-Fri 0915-1400 (except Spanish National holidays).



Tickets

Included with your detailed itinerary is an e-ticket, which shows your flight reference number. You will need to quote/show this reference number at the check-in desk, and you will be issued with your boarding pass. Online check-in is not available.

Your Group Scheduled or Club Class ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.



Baggage allowance

We advise you to check the baggage allowances carefully as you are likely to be charged the excess if you exceed the weight limit. Maximum weights for single bags apply.

With British Airways your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 23kg plus one cabin bag no bigger than 56 x 45 x 5 cm and a personal bag (handbag or computer case) no bigger than 45 x 36 x 20 cm.

Please contact the airline for further information.

<http://www.britishairways.com>

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Departure Tax

The departure tax is included in the price of your flight tickets.

Transfers

On arrival in Madrid, transfer to the Agumar Hotel, approximately a 20-minute drive.

Border Control

At border control, you may need to:

- show a return or onward ticket.
- show you have enough money for your stay.
- use separate lanes from EU, EEA and Swiss citizens when queueing.

Taking food into EU countries

You are not able to take meat, milk or any products containing them into EU countries.

Special Requests

If you haven't already done so, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements. Please note that some airlines may charge for use of wheelchairs.



Accommodation

Agumar Hotel, Madrid

The Hotel Agumar is situated in the centre of Madrid's Art district, making it an excellent base for this tour. There are great transport links from here with Madrid's centre, making it easy to get around if you wish to explore beyond the tour itinerary. Facilities at the hotel include a café that offers a lunchtime and an 'a la carte' menu, and a restaurant, where the two included dinners will take place. The quiet and spacious rooms include minibar, safe, air-conditioning, heating, hairdryer, wake-up call service, wi-fi and bath with shower.

For more information, please visit the hotel's website:

<https://www.hotelmadridagumar.com/en/>



Food

Spain's eating and drinking culture is one of its greatest attractions. The Spaniards take their food seriously – be it diner-style *menús del día* (menus of the day) or elaborate, nouvelle cuisine in gourmet restaurants. Food is generally dictated by the seasons and fresh, whichever corner of Spain you go to. An excellent way to understand different facets of Spanish cuisine is to sample tapas: small snacks served with drinks in local bars across the country. They can range from gourmet canapés to simple plates of olives, cheeses and cured meats, and may be charged or given free.

Madrid is home to food from every region of Spain, and much of the rest of the world, and it also has some specialities of its own, such as; **Cocido** Madrileño, a fragrant and rich chickpea and meat stew; Heuvos rotos, this typical and very tasty Madrid dish is essentially fried eggs cracked over fried potatoes all prepared with Spanish olive oil; Bocadillo de Calamares, the city's most famous sandwich, crusty bread loaded with fried calamari; Croquetas, Crispy on the outside and creamy on the inside, Spanish croquettes can be filled with just about any savoury option you can imagine.

For more ideas on regional dishes please visit:

<https://madridfoodtour.com/typical-foods-in-madrid/>

Other typical Spanish dishes

Paella: A Valencian rice dish loaded with seafood and chicken or rabbit, saffron and vegetables.

Tortilla Española: A rich, chunky potato omelette – a staple throughout Spain.

Gazpacho: A chilled tomato-based, tangy vegetable soup from Andalucía.

Jamón: One of many cured Spanish meats, Jamón is a type of finely sliced cured ham.

Chorizo: A dried and course pork sausage seasoned with smoked paprika.

Most restaurants serve a *menú del día* at lunchtime, this is a three-course meal including drinks that generally costs between €10 and €20 and can be very good value.



Drink

Spanish drinks have brewed up quite a storm worldwide, from the thirst-quenching sangria to bubbly Cava and sophisticated Rioja wine.

Spain is essentially a wine-drinking country, with sherry being one of the principal export products. Its English name is the anglicised version of the sherry producing town *Jerez*, from which the wine was first shipped to England. There are four main types: *fino* (very pale and dry), *amontillado* (dry, rich and dark), *oloroso* (medium, full-bodied, fragrant and golden), and *dulce* (sweet).

Well-known Spanish beers (*cerveza*) include *San Miguel*, *Damm*, *Estrella Galicia* and *Cruzcampo*. Spanish brandy is as different from French as Scotch whisky is from Irish. It is relatively cheap, pleasant, although some brandy drinkers may find it a little sweet. Brands include *Carlos I*, *Osbourne* and *Fundador*.

Meals included in the holiday are:

Breakfast daily and two dinners at the hotel, including wine.



Destination

Spain's capital, Madrid, and nearby Toledo have a wondrous collection of museums, churches and cathedrals with peerless art collections. This new tour, in the company of erudite art expert, Peter Higginson, will enhance your understanding and appreciation of Spanish art with a series of illuminating visits and lectures, including two visits to the renowned Prado Museum, a visit to El Greco's house in Toledo and the Museo Sorolla, which showcases Spain's finest Impressionist painter, and the impressive El Escorial.

Places of interest included in the tour:

Madrid

Cosmopolitan and vibrant, Madrid has been the capital of Spain since 1562 and is a thriving city where culture and entertainment equally share the limelight. This friendly city, which does its best to make everyone feel right at home, provides the visitor with some of the world's most interesting attractions. The city hosts over eighty museums and more than two thousand monuments, both historical and artistic, all of which contribute to the city's richness and a distinctly European cultural heritage. Among its highlights are the medieval centre dating back to the Habsburg Empire and the infamous Prado Museum. In addition to its famous museums and other sites, Madrid charms with its busy streets dotted with shops, cafes, bars and restaurants, and has an authenticity that is hard to match.

Museo del Prado

The Prado Museum houses the world's richest and most comprehensive collection of Spanish painting, as well as masterpieces of other European schools of painting, especially Italian and Flemish Art. It is home to numerous masterpieces such as *Las Meninas* by Velázquez, *the Two Majas* by Goya, *Nobleman with his hand on his chest* by El Greco, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Bosch, and *The Three Graces* by Rubens, among other priceless pieces. The museum opened its doors for the first time in 1819, although the building was originally designed as a Natural history museum on the orders of King Charles 111. However, the King's grandson, King Ferdinand VII intervened and the Royal Museum, was quickly renamed the National

Museum of Paintings and Sculptures and subsequently the Museo Nacional del Prado.

The original collection has expanded over time through careful selection, donation, and acquisition of works. The Museum also holds timeless sculptures, drawings, prints, architectural wonders, and photographs, and has one of the world's finest restoration workshops. In 2019 the museum welcomed over three million visitors.

For more information, please visit:

<https://theculturetrip.com/europe/spain/articles/the-history-of-the-prado-museum-in-1-minute/>

Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum

Located on Madrid's 'Art Walk', this wonderful museum holds a vast collection of around 1000 pieces that traces the history of European painting from the Middle Ages through to the late 20th century. The collection is the result of the late Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza's penchant for purchasing works to add to the collection he had inherited from his father, Baron Heinrich. Initially loaned to Spain for a period of nine and a half years, it was eventually bought by the Spanish state in 1993.

During his lifetime, Baron Heinrich collected 525 paintings. After his death in 1947, the works were divided amongst his heirs, but his son set out to buy them all back from his relatives and then continued to acquire new works. In the 80s it became clear that the rooms in the villa his father had bought in Lugano, Switzerland, to house the collection were no longer large enough and Hans Heinrich started looking for a new location. He received several offers from governments and organisations around the world, but it was the Spanish government that was the most convincing. The baron moved his masterpieces to Villahermosa Palace, an 18th century building restored by Rafael Moneo, which stood just a few metres from Madrid's magnificent Prado Museum, founding what is now one of the world's first-class museums.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.museothyssen.org/en/baron-thyssen-bornemisza-centenary-2021>

Ermita de San Antonio de la Florida

The Royal Chapel of St. Anthony of La Florida is a Neoclassical chapel and is best known for its ceiling and dome frescoes of the miracles of St Anthony by Francisco Goya. It was also his final burial place. The

colour and use of light in Goya's images are stunning. Featuring a rare mix of elements, including his unique, simultaneously ethereal and sensual 'angels', they are among his best and most complex works.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.patrimonionacional.es/en/visita/chapel-san-antonio-de-la-florida>

Museo Sorolla

This museum features work of Joaquín Sorolla and members of his family and is housed in what was Joaquín Sorolla's family house until it became a museum in 1932. It is a delightful house, with each room full of everyday objects and other items, such as furniture, sculptures, jewellery, and an eclectic ceramics collection with more than 1000 pieces, dating from the 15th to early 20th centuries. The museum is surrounded by a very attractive Andalusian-style garden.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.introducingmadrid.com/sorolla-museum>

El Escorial

Just over a half hour drive northwest of Madrid, El Escorial is one of the most important landmarks in Spain. The Royal Site of San Lorenzo de Escorial, or 'El Escorial' as it is commonly known in Spain, is a royal palace and monastery, which dates to the 16th century. It was commissioned by Philip II in the late 16th century and expanded by Charles IV of Spain as the royal monastery of the kings of Spain. It has been the final resting place for most of Spain's kings since then and continues to play an important role in Spanish royal life today.

The centre of El Escorial is the Basilica of San Lorenzo el Real, a breath-taking place that fuses together brilliant architecture, painting and sculpture. The Palace of Phillip II is beside the Basilica and actually looks into the church from the King's bedroom. The Hall of Battles has paintings depicting all of Spain's military victories. There is an art gallery and an architectural museum. One of the most beautiful places at El Escorial is the Garden of the Friars. There is also a massive library with more than forty thousand books, and itself is a piece of art with a stunning roof made up of different paintings. El Escorial has been a UNESCO World Heritage site for almost thirty years.

For more information, please visit:

<https://el-escorial.com/>

Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando

The Royal Academy of Fine Arts houses over 1,400 paintings, 600 sculptures and 15,000 drawings, as well as an excellent collection of decorative arts objects, including tapestries, silverware, ceramics, porcelain, clocks, furniture and medals. The Academy's permanent collection contains masterpieces of Spanish, Italian and Flemish art, and has 13 paintings by Goya. The Academy trained and nurtured an incredible number of Spanish artists over the centuries including Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Antonio López García, Juan Luna, Oscar de la Renta and Fernando Botero. During his life, Francisco Goya was a director of the prestigious institution. Established by order of King Fernando VI in the middle of the 18th century, the academy was moved about twenty years later, under King Charles III, to its present location.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.hisour.com/real-academia-de-bellas-artes-de-san-fernando-madrid-spain-5841/>

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

Spain's national museum of 20th century art, named after Queen Sofía, houses paintings by Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró and Juan Gris as well as one of Spain's most famous artworks, Picasso's Guernica. Its collection, which comprises over 22,000 works, spans much of the 20th century and is divided into three sections: *The Irruption of the 20th Century. Utopia and Conflict (1900-1945)*, *Is the War Over? Art in a Divided World (1945-1968)*, and *From Revolt to Postmodernity (1962-1982)*.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.esmadrid.com/en/tourist-information/reina-sofia-museum>

Toledo

Toledo is truly one of Spain's most magnificent cities. Dramatically sited atop a gorge overlooking the Río Tajo, in the Middle Ages it was known as the 'city of three cultures', a place where Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities peacefully coexisted. Horseshoe-arched mosques, Sephardic synagogues and one of Spain's finest Gothic cathedrals cram into its dense historical core. Toledo's other forte is art, in particular the haunting canvases of El Greco, with whom the city is synonymous.

El Greco and Toledo

Although El Greco, “the Greek,” is most usually known as a Spanish painter, he was born Domenikos Theotokopoulos in Crete in 1541 and spent much of his life in Italy. He was trained in the tradition of Byzantine icon painting in either Crete or Venice, where many Cretans had settled, and by the 1560s was painting in Titian’s workshop. In the 1570s he went to Rome. Although El Greco was well reputed in Italy, he failed to secure any commissions in the city and was eventually convinced by a Spaniard to move to Toledo, where he spent the next forty years of his life, and where he died in 1614.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.el-greco-foundation.org/>

El Greco House and Museum

Opened in 1911, this museum is situated in Toledo's Jewish Quarter. It consists of two buildings: a 16th-century house with a courtyard, and an extension dating from the early 20th century. The two share a garden. The museum houses numerous works by El Greco, especially from this brilliant painter's last period, as well as canvases by other 17th century Spanish painters, furniture from the same era and pottery from Talavera de la Reina.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.spainisculture.com/en/museos/toledo/casa-museo-de-el-greco.html>

Church of Santo Tomé

This church dates from the 12th century, although it was completely rebuilt in the early 14th century by the Count of Orgaz. The tower is one of the best examples of the Mudéjar art characteristic of Toledo. The two upper sections are made of brick, with two groups of two and three windows with pointed horseshoe arches scalloped with other lobed arches. The interior is home to one of El Greco’s most famous paintings, the Burial of the Count of Orgaz.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.sacred-destinations.com/spain/toledo-santo-tome>

Toledo Cathedral

Toledo Cathedral is ranked among the greatest Gothic structures in Europe. Inside, the cathedral contains important masterpieces including a spectacular baroque high altar. The sacristy is a veritable art gallery of old masters, with works by Velázquez, Goya and El Greco.

For more information, please visit:

<https://travelpast50.com/toledo-spain-cathedral/>

Reading Suggestions

The following are three guidebooks that in Peter Higginson’s opinion are particularly useful.

Annie Bennet, *Blue Guide Madrid*, 2000

Dana Facaros & Michael Pauls, *Madrid*, Cadogan Guides, 2004

Anthony Ham & Josephine Quintero, *Madrid*, Lonely Planet, 2019

Suggestions of Art and History books with general coverage relevant to the tour are:

Jonathan Brown, *Painting in Spain, 1500–1700*. Yale, 1999.

Still by far the best, in-depth survey on Spanish art in the early modern period. At present out of print, but still obtainable at second-hand book outlets.

John F. Moffitt, *The Arts in Spain: From Prehistory to Postmodernism*. Thames and Hudson, 1999

Jani Tomlinson, *From El Greco to Goya: Painting in Spain 1561-1828*, Laurence King, 2014

Emma Hansen, *Spanish Painting 1200-1665*, Koenemann. 2020

Emma Hansen & Ruth Dangelmeier, *Spanish Painting 1665-1920*, Koenemann, 2020

Your lecturer / Guide

Dr Peter Higginson specialises in the art and culture of early modern Europe, and the modern period. He has taught numerous university courses abroad and has wide experience in leading cultural tours to different parts of Europe including Rome, Venice, Florence, Paris and further afield to Cuba.

Peter will deliver two lectures during the tour.

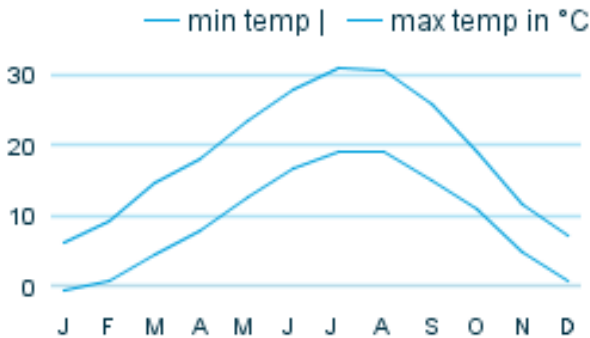
Tour Manager

Dr Higginson is also the tour manager for this tour and will be on hand throughout to ensure that everything operates according to plan. If you have any problems or questions, please see him immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.



The Basics

Climate – The weather at this time of year is likely to be pleasant, but evenings may get a little cool and there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.



Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – Italian

Religion – Roman Catholic

National holidays – New Year's Day (01 Jan); Epiphany (06 Jan); Easter Monday; Liberation day (25 Apr); Labour Day (01 May); Republic day (02 Jun); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); All Saints' day (01 Nov); Immaculate conception (08 Dec); Christmas day (25 Dec); St Stephens day (26 Dec).

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you are eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it is advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you'll find a huge amount of bottled water for sale too)

Shops & Museums – Department stores are open 0830-1930 Monday to Saturday. Most shops are closed between 1230-1530. Please note that some museums close on Mondays.

Although very common in tourist towns in Italy, please note that street vendors selling all kinds of designer knockoffs are illegal and could land you with a hefty fine. Care should also be taken when buying antiques since Italy is renowned for skilled imitators.

Clothes & Shoes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good flat/grip walking shoes are recommended.

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – The guarantee of free mobile phone roaming throughout the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway has ended. Check with your phone operator to find out about any roaming charges that might be applied after 1st January 2021. A new law means that you are protected from getting mobile data charges above £45 without you knowing. Once you reach £45, you need to opt in to spend more so that you can continue using the internet while you are abroad. Your phone operator will tell how you can do this.

Tipping – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one awards with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS 'Fit for Travel' website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

Before you travel, make sure you have got a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) or travel insurance with health cover.

You may not have access to free emergency medical treatment and could be charged for your healthcare if you do not have an EHIC or GHIC when visiting an EU country, or travel insurance with full healthcare cover when visiting Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein. If you have an EHIC it will still be valid while it remains in date. Your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) will be valid if you are travelling to an EU country.

For further information about the GHIC please visit: <https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045 (Mon-Fri 0900-1700)

Outside office hours, please telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7841 023807

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you need consular assistance during your holiday:

British Embassy Madrid

Torre Espacio

Paseo de la Castellana 259D

28046 Madrid, Spain

Tel: +34 917 146 300

Fax: +34 917 146 301

www.gov.uk/contact-consulate-madrid

British Embassy opening hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm

The British Consulate General in Madrid is open by appointment only.

24/7 support is available by telephone for all routine enquiries and emergencies. Please call: + (34) 91 714 63 00.

Travel Editions

3 Young's Buildings, London EC1V 9DB

Tel: 020 7251 0045

Email: tours@traveleditions.co.uk www.traveleditions.co.uk

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