

MADRID

Madrid is Spain's capital city. It's not only located in the center of the country, it *is* the center of Spain. Although travelers come to visit Madrid's main attractions—including the fantastic Prado Museum—they soon get caught up in the city's lively nightlife. The *tapas* scene alone is worth the trip. Although you'll find plenty of new buildings, you'll also find Baroque and neo-Classical structures such as the Plaza Mayor (where it seems at times that everyone in Madrid is visiting) and the grand Palacio Real (Royal Palace).



Most of the city's main sights are within easy walking distance, making Madrid a visitor-friendly place. We'll discover the best sights of Madrid on two walks.

MAJOR SIGHTS WALK I

Highlights: **Palacio Real**, **Catedral de la Almudena**, and **Plaza Mayor**. See map on page 24. Approximate distance one mile.

Take the metro to the Ópera stop. When you exit, you'll be in the square Plaza de Isabel II. The large building here is the back of the Royal Theater. Facing the Royal Theater, head left to the street Calle de Vergara. Turn right onto Calle de Vergara and then right onto Calle de Carlos III and head into the large square.

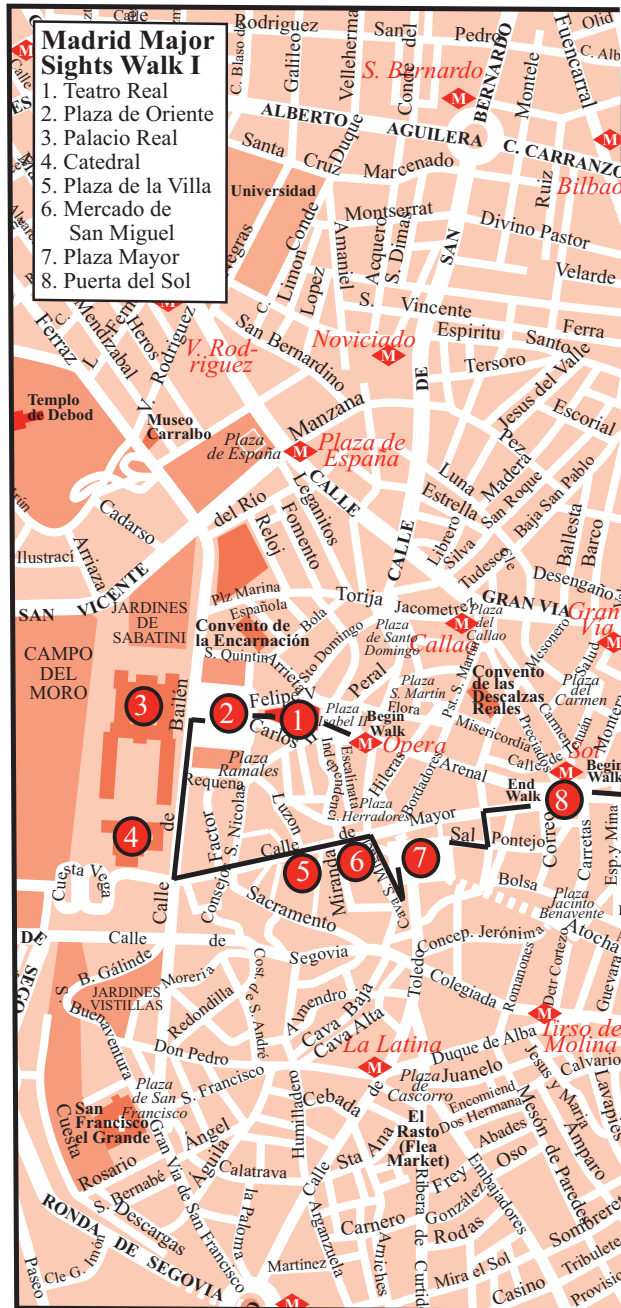
This square is the **Plaza de Oriente**. It's lined with statues of the kings and queens of Spain (that's Philip IV on his horse in the center of the square).

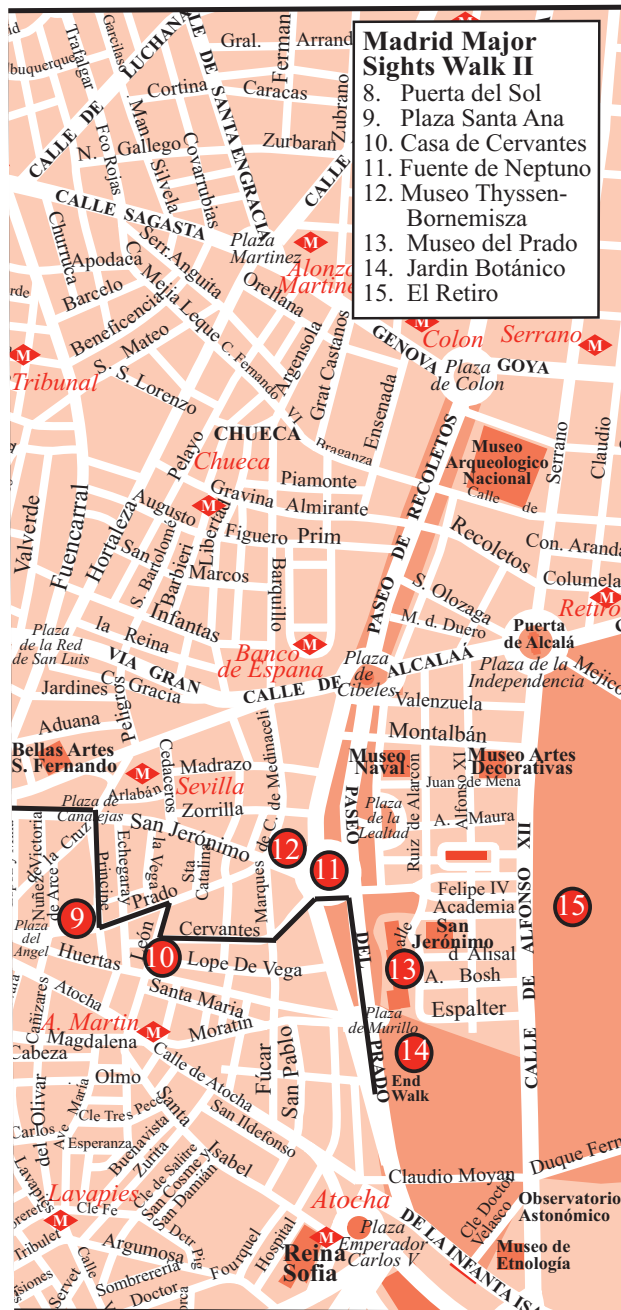
On one side of the square is the **Teatro Real** (Royal Theater). It was built in 1850 and is the site of opera and ballet performances, but the real star is the interior of the building itself. There are guided tours Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 11am to 1pm, and Saturday and Sunday 11am to 1:30pm. A 50-minute tour is €4 and a 30-minute "rapida" tour is €2.

That huge building on the square is our next sight.

Perched on a hill overlooking the city, the **Palacio Real** (Royal Palace) has 3,000 rooms, and some are open to the public. Spaniards will proudly tell you that it's twice as large as Buckingham Palace. You can visit the rooms of King Alfonso XIII, who was the last resident until he abdicated in 1931.

The present building dates back to 1738, and is built on the site of a former Moorish fortress. Also, don't miss the Painting Gallery (filled with pieces by such notables as Velázquez and Goya), the Throne Room, the Reception Room and the Royal Armoury. The elaborate Changing of the Guard takes place in the courtyard at noon on the first





Wednesday of every month. *Tel. 91/4548800. Open Oct-Mar Mon-Sat 9:30am-5pm, Sun 9am-2pm, Apr-Sep Mon-Sat 9am-6pm, Sun 9am-3pm. Admission: €9. Metro: Ópera. www.patrimonionacional.es.*

With the Royal Palace to your back, head right down Calle de Bailén. To your right is our next stop, just past the Royal Palace.

Construction of the **Catedral de Nuestra Señora de la Almudena** began in 1883 and was not completed until 1993. Admission is free, so enter through the huge sculpted doors and look up at the colorful ceiling. In a chapel behind the altar is the empty 12th-century coffin of St. Isidro, the patron saint of Madrid. Forty years after he died, the coffin was opened (now, who decided to do this?) and his body had not decayed, which was enough for the pope to canonize him. He's buried elsewhere in the city. *10 Calle de Bailén. Tel. 91/5422200. Open daily 10am-1:30pm and 6pm-8pm. Admission: Free. Metro: Ópera.*

Continue down Calle de Bailén until you reach Calle Mayor. Take a left onto Calle Mayor. Walk down the left side of the street. At Calle de la Almudena, you'll notice a bronze statue of a man looking at a glass enclosure.

The glass enclosure contains the ruins of the church **Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Almudena**.

Pass Calle de Factor and Calle de San Nicolás. At Calle de Calderón de la Barca, cross the street to the square.

You can experience a little bit of medieval times at the **Plaza de la Villa**. This is Madrid's oldest square, dominated by the **Casa de la Villa**, the former town hall (to your right). The building straight ahead is **Casa de Cisneros**, which dates back to 1537. To your left is the 15th-century tower **Torre de los Lujanes**.

Continue down Calle Mayor. Turn right at Plaza de San Miguel.

The iron-and-glass building here is the 1915 **Mercado de San Miguel**, filled with fresh produce, meats and lots of stinky fish.

After you've visited the market, turn right from the Plaza de San Miguel onto Cava de San Miguel.

The narrow bars that look like caves here are called *mesones*, and are an interesting place for a late-night *sangria*. This is a great area to have a drink and *tapas*.

Head down Cava de San Miguel and it turns into Calle Cuchilleros.

On the left at number 17 is **Botín**, made famous in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. You'll eat in tiled, wood-beamed dining rooms in Madrid's (and allegedly, the world's) oldest restaurant. It's quite touristy, but the food, especially roast suckling pig (*cochinillo asado*), won't disappoint. Stop here for a meal if you have the time. Moderate-Expensive. Tel. 91/3664217. Open daily. Reservations required. Metro: Puerta del Sol or La Latina.

Turn around and head back up the street to the steps leading into Madrid's grand square. On the steps up, you'll pass Las Cuevas de Luis Candelas, Madrid's oldest tavern.

The **Plaza Mayor** is an arcaded and cobblestone square dating back to 1617. It's surrounded by buildings with balconies and is truly the heart of **Viejo Madrid** (Old Madrid), and one of Europe's grandest squares. Throughout the years the square has seen everything from public executions during the Inquisition to bullfights. Notice the colorful paintings on the **Casa de la Panaderia** ("bakery") on the north side of the square. It remains a meeting place for all of Madrid, and is the sight of

Restaurant Tip

LAS CUEVAS DE LUIS CANDELAS

1 Calle Cuchilleros

Tel. 91/3665428

Open daily

*Metro: Puerta del Sol
or La Latina*

Okay, so it's touristy with its strolling musicians and host dressed like a bandit. But this "cave" off of the Plaza Mayor is the oldest tavern in Madrid. *Tapas* and dining (especially barbecued meats). Moderate-Expensive.

of frequent markets and festivals. There's a huge Christmas market here in December, and a stamp, coin and art market on Sundays from around 10am to 2pm That's Felipe III, who ordered this square to be built, on his horse in the center of the square. Take a stroll around this grand square.

You can exit the square through the northeast corner (between numbers 31 and 32) onto the street Calle de la Sal. Turn left onto Calle de Postas. You'll pass a branch of the Museo del Jamón ("Museum of Ham")—a tapas bar—on your left, and then continue on to the large square Puerta del Sol. From here you can take the Puerta del Sol metro back to your hotel, or you can continue on to our next walk.

MAJOR SIGHTS WALK II

Highlights: **Puerta del Sol**, **Museo del Prado** and **Parque del Retiro**. See map on page 25. Approximate distance one mile.

Take the metro to Puerta del Sol to begin this walk.

The **Puerta del Sol** (which means "Gateway of the Sun") is always crowded. There's a bronze plaque set into the sidewalk on the south side of the square from which all distances in Spain are measured. That statue is King Charles III (who ruled from 1759-1788) on his horse. He's facing a building that dates back to 1768 and is now the headquarters of Madrid's regional government. Check out the huge Tio Pepe sign, Madrid's first billboard. On the corner of Calle de Carmen is a bronze statue of a bear – the symbol of Madrid.

From the square, head east in the direction of the Tio Pepe sign (the street to the right of the Tio Pepe sign) on Carrera de San Jerónimo. Walk on the right side of the street.

At the corner of Calle Victoria is the **Museo del Jamón** at 6 Carrera de San Jerónimo. The "Museum of Ham" isn't really a museum, but a chain of delis serving and selling ham. You can't miss it, as you'll see hundreds of hams hanging from the ceiling. Try a glass of sherry and cured ham. There's a restaurant upstairs (where you'll pay more).

If you want a drink or something to eat, another choice is **Salon Puerta del Sol** at number 16, a beautiful eatery with stone walls and ornate carved wood.

You'll pass Calle de la Cruz and then arrive at the Plaza de Canalejas. Turn right onto Calle de Principe. Head down Calle de Principe.

You'll soon run into our next sight, the **Plaza Santa Ana**. This pleasant square is located in one of Madrid's oldest neighborhoods. This is where many Madrileños congregate on weekend evenings. It's home to **Teatro Español**, the city's oldest theater dating back to 1745 (it's to your left). Across the square is the stately Hotel Reina Victoria (now renovated and home to a Hard Rock Hotel). There are great places to take a break here, especially **Cervecería Alemana** at number 6. One street off of the square (at the end of Calle de Principe) is **Casa Alberto** at 18 Calle de las Huertas. This *taberna* and restaurant has been open since 1827. You'll have great *tapas* or main courses at reasonable prices, and the staff is exceptionally friendly. These two eateries are included in the *Tapas Walk* in this book.

Take a left onto Calle de Prado. You'll pass Calle de Echegaray and Calle de Ventura de la Vega. Turn right at Calle de León and then make a left onto Calle de Cervantes (the first street on your left).

You'll pass the **Casa de Cervantes** at the corner of Calle de Cervantes and Calle de León. This is where Cervantes, the author of *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, died. It's on the right side of the street.

Continue along Calle de Cervantes. It will turn slightly to the left at Plaza de Jesus.

You'll soon find yourself at the beautiful fountain **Fuente de Neptuno** on the Plaza de Cánovas del Castillo. The fountain is named after the Roman god of the sea. Across the square is the **Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza** at 8 Paseo del Prado. It contains an interesting and eclectic collection, acquired by the

Spanish government in 1993, featuring works by Picasso, Velázquez, Goya, El Greco and Rembrandt. It also has a collection of contemporary works, including some by Pollock, Lichtenstein and Kandinsky. It's closed on Mondays.

Head to your right down the Paseo del Prado.

That massive museum you'll see on your left is the **Museo del Prado**, one of Europe's greatest museums, with 7,000 paintings by such notables as Velázquez, Goya, El Greco, Titian, Botticelli, Murillo and Rubens. *Paseo del Prado, Tel. 91/3302800, Open Tue-Sun 9am-8pm, Admission €6, under 18 free. Free Sun, Metro: Banco de España or Atocha, www.museoprado.es.* The **Cáson del Buen Retiro** in El Retiro park behind the museum houses more of the museum's collection.

You can visit the museum, or if you walk past the museum, you'll see the **Jardín Botánico**, Madrid's large botanical garden (open daily, €2). Behind the museum is **El Retiro**, a 350-acre park. It dates back to the 1630s, and is filled with statues, fountains, a lake, and lots of locals (and tourists) enjoying this vast green space in the midst of Madrid. Art is showcased in the **Palacio de Cristal** and the **Palacio de Velázquez**, 19th-century pavilions in the park. We'll end our walk here.

TAPAS WALK

Approximate distance a half-mile. See map on the next page.

The Spanish love *tapas*. They're small amounts of nearly any kind of food, usually served with a small glass of wine, beer or spirit. The time between lunch and dinner is usually when most Spaniards frequent *tapas* bars. You can have a *porción* (small sample) or a *ración* (a larger serving). Bars that serve wine, beer and snacks/appetizers (both hot and cold) are known as *tascas*. *Tapeo* is the act of bar-hopping in the early evening, eating *tapas* and drinking, before Spain's very late dinner hour.

Remember that this is meant to be a walk, not a stagger. Like the Madrileños, you should enjoy a leisurely evening. Take your time at each place. Sample something you've never had



before. You might discover that you actually like sardine heads.

A few tips that will help you with this walk: Many *tapas* bars don't take credit cards, and it's usually cheaper to order at the bar rather than at a table.

Our walk begins at the Plaza Santa Ana. One way to reach the square is to take the metro to the Sevilla stop on Calle de Alcalá. Head south down Calle de Sevilla to the Plaza de Canalejas. Off of this plaza, head down Calle de Principe. You'll soon run into the Plaza Santa Ana but don't stop just yet. At the square (on your left) is the Teatro Español, the city's oldest theater dating back to 1745. If you continue past the square and keep walking, you'll run into Calle de las Huertas and our first stop.

At number 18 is my favorite *tapas* bar in Madrid. **Casa Alberto**, a *taberna* and restaurant, has been open since 1827. You'll have great *tapas* or main courses at reasonable prices, and the staff is exceptionally friendly. Why don't you stand at the bar and have *albóndigas de ternera* (veal meatballs). They're fabulous! Down them with a glass of *vino tinto* (red wine).

Now head back to the Plaza Santa Ana.

This pleasant square is located in one of Madrid's oldest neighborhoods. This is where many Madrileños congregate

on weekend evenings. In addition to the **Teatro Español**, the square is also home to the stately Hotel Reina Victoria, which has been renovated and is now the Hard Rock Hotel Madrid.

On the south side of the square are three places you can visit.

At number 6 is **Cervecería Alemana**, the best of the many *tapas* bars on the square, which was built in 1904 and modeled after a German beer hall (*Alemana* means “German” in Spanish). Have a beer. It’ll be served in a white stein. Ernest Hemingway drank here, but that’s really no big deal since he drank all over Madrid. Why don’t you order *aceitunas* (olives), a popular snack? You’ll be eating more later.

Another beer hall here is **Cervecería Santa Ana** at number 10. Here you can have a plate of *jamón y queso* (cured ham and cheese).

Another *tapas* spot here is **La Moderna** at number 12. Try a glass of delicious Spanish wine and a cheese plate, for which this place is known.

From the south side of the square, head across the square to the north side and turn right onto Calle de Manuel Fernández y González.

At number 7 is the popular bar **Viva Madrid**. It has fantastic tiled walls and an incredible carved ceiling. You come here to drink and, if you do stop, it’s likely that the crowd will be young and lively.

Keep moving, eating and drinking! With Viva Madrid to your back, head left down Calle de Manuel Fernández y González. You’ll pass Calle de Echegaray. The next street is Calle Ventura de la Vega. On the corner at 10-17 Calle de Manuel Fernández y González is our final stop.

At the tile bar **Taberna Toscana**, you’ll sit on stools and taste a wide selection of *tapas* under sausages hanging from the ceiling. Try the fantastic *ternera* (veal) dish swimming in a delicious sauce (with french fries). A specialty here (if you’re

up to it) is *morcilla* (blood sausage). Try it. It's an interesting choice. When in Spain...

To return to where you began your walk, head back to the Plaza Santa Ana and then back up Calle de Principe to Calle Sevilla and Sevilla metro stop.

Convento de las Descalzas Reales

3 Plaza de las Descalzas Reales

Tel. 91/4548800

Open Sat and Tue-Thu 10:30am-12:30pm and 4pm-5:30pm,

Fri 10:30am-12:30pm, Sun 11am-1:30pm

Admission: €5. Guided tour only (45 minutes, in Spanish)

Metro: Puerta del Sol

www.patrimonionacional.es

Noblewomen who entered this convent in the mid-16th century brought incredibly rich dowries. Inside you'll find an incredible collection of tapestries, a chapel with an ornate gold altar, extraordinary statues, a piece of wood said to be from Christ's cross, and paintings by the likes of Titian and Goya.

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

52 Calle de Santa Isabel

Tel. 91/4675062

Open Mon-Sat 10am-9pm,

Sun 10am-2:30pm

Admission: €3. Free Sat after 2:30pm and Sun; under 18 and over 65 free

Metro: Atocha

www.museoreinasofia.es

If you travel to Madrid to see traditional art, you head for the Prado. If you're interested in 20th-century

art, come here. This contemporary-art museum is housed in an 18th-century building that once was a hospital. There is an emphasis on 20th-century Spanish artists such as Picasso, Miró

Shopping Tip

EL CORTE INGLÉS

1-4 Calle de Preciados (and branches throughout the city)

Tel. 91/3798000

Open Mon-Sat 10am-9:30pm and some Sun

Metro: Puerta del Sol

www.elcorteingles.es

This is *the* department store in Madrid and all of Spain. Check out the supermarket on the lower level.

and Dalí. It's most famous painting is Picasso's masterpiece, *Guernica*, an anti-war painting of the bombing of the town of Guernica by the Germans during the Spanish Civil War. The museum recently opened a spectacular new wing, and there are great views from the transparent exterior elevators.

Restaurant Tips

CASA PACO

11 Plaza de Puerta Cerrada

Tel. 91/3663166

Closed Sun and Aug

Reservations required

Metro: La Latina

After a shot of red wine at the zinc-topped bar, you order steaks by weight in the tiled dining rooms. Grilled lamb and fish are also served. Moderate – Expensive.

EL BOGAVANTE DE ALMIRANTE

11 Calle de Almirante

Tel. 91/5321850

Closed Sun (dinner) and part of Aug

This restaurant and bar (the Boga Bar) has an attractive deep red-and-black décor. It's located in a cavelike basement with a brick vaulted ceiling. The food matches the setting and emphasizes seafood. If you're not in the mood for seafood, try the delicious *pato* (duck). Moderate–Expensive.

OMERTÀ

17 Calle de Gravina

Tel. 91/7010242

Open daily

This attractive restaurant and bar with brick-and-stone walls serves delicious pasta dishes and pizza. Try the penne with gorgonzola. Moderate.

Chueca

Neighborhood bounded on the south by the Gran Vía, on the west by Calle de Fuencarral, and on the east by the Paseo de Recoletas
Metro: Chueca

This trendy area is home to many cafés, shops and restaurants. A seat at a café on the **Plaza de Chueca** is one of the best places in Madrid to people-watch. Take a look at the beautifully decorated 1897 bar **Bodega de Ángel Sierra** on the square. It's the one with the fun and diverse crowd spilling onto the square.

Plaza de Toros de las Ventas

237 Calle de Alcalá

Tel. 91/7263570

Open: Sun Mar-Oct. Box office open Fri-Sun 10am-2pm and 5pm-8pm

Admission: Begins at €11

Metro: Ventas

It's certainly not for everyone, but attending a bullfight (*corrida*) is the quintessential Spanish experience. The free **Museo Taurino** (Bullfighting Museum) is also here.



Real Ermita de San Antonio de la Florida

Glorieta de San Antonio de la Florida

Tel. 91/5420722

Open Tue-Fri 10am-2pm and 4pm-8pm, Sat-Sun 10am-2pm

Admission: Free

Metro: Príncipe Pío (about a 10-minute walk from the metro stop along Paseo de la Florida)

www.munimadrid.es

Goya's "Sistine Chapel." Francisco de Goya painted the dome and vaults of this neo-Classical hermitage in 1798. After an extensive restoration, you can view this fantastic work featuring St. Anthony of Padua raising a man from the dead. Goya is buried here but not his head, which is said to have been taken by scientists who wanted to study his brain.

Museo de América

(Museum of the Americas)

6 Avenida de los Reyes Católicos (at Avenida Arco de la Victoria)

Restaurant Tip**CASA MINGO**

34 Paseo de la Florida (across the street from Goya's tomb)

Tel. 91/5477918

Open daily 11am-midnight

Metro: Príncipe Pío (about a 10-minute walk from the metro stop)

No reservations. No credit cards.

You'll share sausages, roast chicken and salad at long tables with other diners at this *bodega* (tavern). Cider (*sidra*) is the drink of choice here. Not to be missed! Inexpensive.

next to the Faro de Madrid)

Tel. 91/5439437

Open Tue-Sat 9:30am-3pm,

Sun 10am-3pm

Admission: €3. Free Sun

Metro: Moncloa

www.museodeamerica.mcu.es

Europe's best collection of pre-Columbian, Spanish-American, and Native American artifacts is found here. A few highlights are the strangest collections: shrunken heads, and sculptures of people with physical defects.

MADRID GETTING THERE/GETTING AROUND

Flights arrive at Barajas International Airport. There's a tourist information center at the airport. The metro connects with the airport (Aeropuerto/Barajas stop in Terminal 2). It's a long (indoor) walk from the terminal to the metro stop.

Madrid's **metro** system is the easiest way to get around. Prices are €1.30 for a single trip or €5.80 for 10 trips (more than one person can use the ticket). They're also valid on the bus system (except the bus to and from the airport). The metro operates between 6am and 1:30am. **Buses** run between the airport and Plaza de Colón every 10-15 minutes between 5am and 1:30am. The trip costs €3 and takes between 45 minutes to an hour. A taxi from the airport to central Madrid costs around €25.

Madrid's two **train** stations, Chamartín and Atocha, are both on metro lines with access to the city center. Both train stations have tourist information centers. The main bus station is the Estación Sur, south of the city center. There are also helpful tourist information centers at Plaza Mayor, 2

Calle de Duque de Medinaceli (near the Prado Museum), and the Atocha and Chamartín train stations.