

# Travel

**S**pain is famous for its coastline, and unfortunately, you're too far away from it to warrant popping to the beach for a day trip. However, there are a myriad of stunning places to visit in and around the city that can be reached easily and cheaply. This section tells you how to navigate around the city and the Comunidad de Madrid using the fast and efficient public transport system. We take you by bus and train to some quaint *pueblos* in the region and point out a few must-see fiestas that you can travel to by bus and train. There's also a handy guide to

skiing near the capital and in case you get really itchy feet, we've listed some overseas destinations that can be reached by budget airline out of Madrid's airport. Who needs the beach?



## CITY TRANSPORT

Madrid's Metro system, it has been claimed, is the best in Europe — and to be fair, we can't complain (if you do, you obviously haven't been to London). If you are getting the Metro more than twice a day (or if you're buying five or more 10-*viajes metro-bus* tickets per month), then it'll be worth your while getting an *abono* (monthly pass for Metro, EMT buses and RENFE trains within the respective zones). You will most likely only need a *zona central* (A) pass, which covers the

whole of the city centre. The next zone out (B1) includes satellite towns such as Getafe and Leganés. The zones continue — B2, B3, C1, C2 — reaching as far into the mountains as Navacerrada and beyond. Ask for a form at one of the main Metro stations or at a tobacco kiosk that advertises "*Abonos Transportes*". With your NIE or passport number and a passport photo they will process your request on the spot, unless it's a youth pass, in which case you can pick it up after 10 days. Once you have purchased this card you will have to buy the monthly pass. A pass for zone A costs €47.60. To avoid queues on the first of the

month, get it a week in advance. You must show your *abono* card to be able to purchase the pass. Buses in Madrid also run very well, but take a little longer thanks to rush-hour traffic. Check [www.ctm-madrid.es](http://www.ctm-madrid.es) under EMT for bus routes. This site also has more detailed information on the *abono transportes*. Madrid is an extremely walkable capital. Cycling may be a hairier prospect, but there is still a solid community of cyclists out there and more bike lanes are being constructed all the time. See [www.pedalibre.org](http://www.pedalibre.org) for more information about two-wheeled travel in the capital.



# BUDGET TRAVEL ABROAD

Madrid's Barajas airport is the perfect place to set off on a cheap flight to numerous exciting destinations. Here's a guide to some of the countries you can travel to from Madrid

## Morocco: Marrakech

A must-see destination where your senses will be bombarded with the scent of mint tea, herbs and spices, and the colourful and vibrant people will offer you a warm welcome. Be prepared to have your photo taken with monkeys, snakes and dancing Berber tribesmen, while listening to trance drummers and having a henna tattoo impregnated into the skin on your hand. Not for the faint-hearted, but an experience of a lifetime. ■ CAMERON MCCOOL

### Language

Arabic and French with some English and Spanish.

### How to get there

Easyjet has cheap flights and British Airways can get you there too.

### Accommodation

#### Splash out: Riad.

Luxurious with friendly, local service. Try:

Dar Bounouar, 9 derb bounouar Kat, Benahid, Medina Marrakesh, tel:+212 24 383 078. www.darbounouar.com

### Budget: Hotels from €8

per night available around the Jemaa el Fna square. See [www.roughguides.com](http://www.roughguides.com) and go to the Marrakech accommodation pages for loads of useful information.

### Money

1 euro = 11 dirham. You can only exchange into dirham in Morocco, so spend it or exchange it all before you leave. Most street vendors accept euros, but usually 1 euro = 10 dirham.

## Hungary: Budapest

The Hungarian capital makes for an intriguing destination full of history. Visit torture chambers at the House of Terror, which is a former Nazi headquarters, and then move on to see the castle district and its stunning Parliament building and views over the rest of the city. Finish with a stroll along the banks of the famous river Danube. ■ SARA STOLTZ

### Language:

Hungarian, with English and German.

### How to get there:

Smartwings has cheap flights from Madrid.

### Accommodation:

#### Splash out: €75:

Carlton Hotel. A nice mid-range hotel with a

great location and delicious breakfast.

**Budget:** €14: Boat Hotel Fortuna [www.fortuna.hao.hu](http://www.fortuna.hao.hu)

### Money:

€1 = 250 forint. Make sure you carry cash, as many places don't accept credit cards.



Photos: InMadrid

## Turkey: Istanbul

Don't miss the chance to take a steam bath in a Turkish Hammam. Once you're rejuvenated make time to visit the Sultanamet district, which includes the breathtaking Topkapi palace, the Blue Mosque and the Aya Sofia Mosque. Boat cruises along the Bosphorous Sea are a fascinating way to get a glimpse of how posh Turks live. Another must-see is the Galata tower — one of the most prominent landmarks in Istanbul, which has a viewing platform and a restaurant at the top. ■ ALEX ELGAR

### Language

Turkish. Haggling, an intrinsic part of Turkish culture, can be better grasped if a few numbers are learnt beforehand.

### How to get there:

Iberia fly from Madrid.

### Accommodation

**Splash out:** Istanbul Four Seasons, just metres from the Blue Mosque and Topkapi Palace.

### Budget: Cheap and

decent guesthouses around the Sultanamet district for €10-20 a night.

### Currency

YTL, (New Turkish Lira).

### Visa Information

Tourist visas can be obtained at the port of entry for a fee of €15. Validity is for three months.



# ALTERNATIVE DAYTRIPS

**Want to re-charge your batteries?  
Fancy a change of scenery?**

**Jeff Wiseman** looks at three of Madrid's smaller treasures, that prove no fuss to get to by bus

The Comunidad de Madrid covers 8,000 km<sup>2</sup>, which means that new pastures and their secrets are only a bus ride away.

## **Buitrago del Lozoya: The tale of Picasso's barber**

Buitrago is known as the medieval corner of the Sierra Norte. Look out for its fortifications — walls which date from the 12th century, and the remains of a castle from the 14th and 15th centuries, and stroll down calle Real to the Picasso Museum. It seems an odd place for such an enterprise, but as it turns out, one village resident, Eugenio Arias, happened to be Picasso's barber. Housed in one room in the basement of the town hall, the museum holds the barber's collection of Picasso's gifts and works.

At the end of calle Real, through a cavernous entrance in the historic walls, Old Buitrago begins. First, there's the Santa Maria del Castillo church, which was beautifully restored in the 1980s, and presently provides some cool solace on a hot day.

**Buses:** Frequent. 60-90 minute journey depending on the route, with Continental Auto from Plaza de Castilla. [www.continental-auto.es](http://www.continental-auto.es)  
**Cost:** €4.75 each way. (Be aware that some return buses start in the north of Spain. Check the timetable for the best options.)  
**Website:** [www.buitrago.org](http://www.buitrago.org)  
**Tourist Office:** c/Tahona 11, Buitrago del Lozoya. Tel: 91 868 16 15

## **Navacerrada: Tyrolean trends**

Nestled at the edge of a reservoir, you could be forgiven for thinking that Navacerrada was in the Austrian lakes. For a peaceful beer or coffee, head for the Hotel Nava Real's sunny terrace (calle Huertas).

Navacerrada's proximity to mountain forests is an added bonus, and several walks are available, all neatly marked on a map from the tourist office. Four of these start in the village itself, including one that leads around the reservoir.

The Pizzeria Rompicapo (Avda. de Madrid, 27) never fails to deliver good Italian fare, to the extent that reservations are recommended at weekends.

After you've browsed, walked, shopped and relaxed, don't forget to surrender to Churreria Felix,



Photo: Jeff Wiseman

near the market end of Paseo de Los Españoles, which provides traditional churros, still presented hanging from a grass loop.

**Buses:** Hourly. 45-60 minute journey, with Larrea S.A. from Moncloa. [www.autobuseslarrea.com](http://www.autobuseslarrea.com)  
**Cost:** €3.40 each way.  
**Website:** [www.ayto-navacerrada.org](http://www.ayto-navacerrada.org)  
**Tourist info:** c/Cuartel, 5, Navacerrada.  
**Tel:** 91 856 03 08

## **Patones de Arriba: The village that time forgot**

After the Civil War, the difficulty with Patones de Arriba was that its sloping hills made it too problematic for a main road to be directed through it. Instead, the road was built along an easier, lower route. Unhappy that they were being passed by, the Arriba residents gradually abandoned their homes and built new ones next to the highway, creating the new village of Patones de Abajo. The Arriba village, already unchanged for centuries, was left to fall apart. In the 70s and 80s, Spaniards realised there was a little gem in the hills awaiting restoration, and life returned to the village. Now, a traffic-free village exists, with narrow paths and more original features than in an estate agent's wildest dreams.

The whole village is an Eco-museum, and two routes are marked for visitors to identify and understand the best of its former glory. Bodegas, stone ovens, pig enclosures and grain floors abound.

**Buses:** Infrequent, especially the return. 80-minute journey. Check timetable - Continental Auto from Plaza de Castilla. [www.continental-auto.es](http://www.continental-auto.es)  
**Cost:** €4 each way.  
**Website:** [www.patones.net](http://www.patones.net)  
**Tourist info:** In the Old Church of San José — virtually the first building on entering the village.  
**Tel:** 91 843 20 26

# ¡VIVA LA FIESTA!

There's nothing Spain likes better than a good party. We've picked some of the biggest — and most bizarre — fiestas to visit during the year

## Las Fallas — Valencia

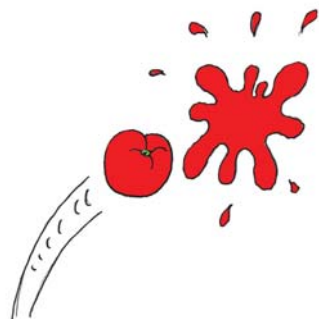
It's fireworks, bangers and bonfires galore at Las Fallas, when the people of Valencia and thousands of visitors put on a party that would give a health-and-safety inspector a minor heart attack. The festival was born in the 18th century, when the townsfolk decided to honour their patron saint Joseph by burning the likenesses of the political figures they weren't so fond of. After surviving a brief prohibition, today Las Fallas offers everything a festival-goer could ask for: fireworks, bullfights, paella-cooking contests, festival queens, and of course, no need to sleep. Book a year in advance, and remember to take some earplugs.

**More Info:** [www.fallas.com](http://www.fallas.com)

**When:** 15-19 March

## Tomatina — Buñol

On one fateful summer's day in 1945, a few kids took the jokes too far at the local fiesta, and knocked a parade mascot into the crowd. The



ensuing food-fight with rotten vegetables got them arrested for disturbing the peace. Unwittingly, they started a tradition, making boring old Buñol the official site of the world's largest

tomato fight — and waste of food — as 30,000 people lob 125,000 kilos of squashed tomatoes at each other.

**More Info:** [www.lahoya.net/tomatina](http://www.lahoya.net/tomatina)

**When:** 27 August

## San Fermín — Pamplona

The world-famous San Fermín festival attracts a crowd from all over the world, who, nicely lubricated by 8am, take their chances as they attempt to outrun a herd of angry bulls. If the



angry bulls are too much for you, you could even try the “running of the bus”, which involves attempting to outrun the municipal bus that takes the same route as the bulls. Needless to say, the council does not look too kindly on these particular additions to San Fermín.

**More Info:** [www.sanfermin.com](http://www.sanfermin.com)

**When:** 6-14 July

## Semana Santa

If you haven't noticed the Catholic vibe in Spain so far, you won't miss it during Semana Santa. The most spectacular processions take place in Seville, the beating heart of Andalusia. Featuring over a hundred floats depicting a suffering Christ or the Virgin Mary, the processions are made up of thousands of accompanying *nazarenos*, the sombre-looking



Illustrations: Aaron Thomas

penitents in the pointy hats. The meshing of Catholics at their most mournful with the all-night *marcha* provides a unique fiesta experience.

**More Info:** [www.exploreseville.com](http://www.exploreseville.com)

**When:** 17-23 March

## Carnaval

The beach is the place to head for Carnival, particularly Cadiz or the Canary Islands. Despite Franco's repression of the festival, the spirit of Carnival endured, and is now one of the biggest parties in the country.

**When:** 31 January-10 February

## Goat throwing

There once was a priest who used his goat's milk to feed the poor people in his village of Maganese de la Polvorosa (Zamora). His goat was as stupid as it was generous. One day it wandered up into a bell tower where the ringing bells frightened it into jumping off and plunging to certain doom. It was saved miraculously by a passer-by who caught it with a blanket. Rather than thank their lucky stars that the goat was not hurt, the villagers decided to tempt fate each year by hog-tying and hurling a goat out of the central belfry, into a crowd holding a blanket 15 metres below, during the San Vicente festival. This controversial celebration, while not for the squeamish, usually ends up with a happy ending.

**When:** fourth Sunday in January

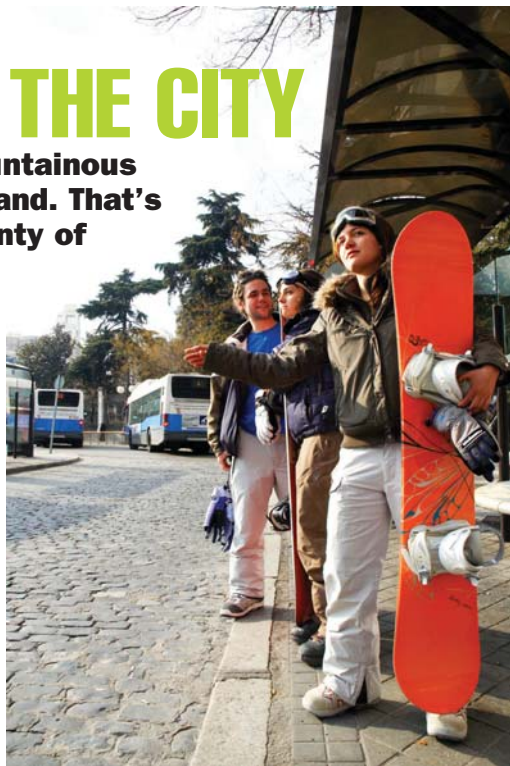
# SKIING OUT OF THE CITY

**Fun Fact: Spain is the most mountainous country in the EU after Switzerland. That's right — just outside Madrid, plenty of white peaks await you, whether you're a snowboarding pro or a slalom beginner**

**Madrid SnowZone.** For just €20, you can find your ski-legs at the largest indoor snow slope in Europe, nestled in the Xanadú shopping centre. **Bus: 528 from Príncipe Pío. See [www.madridsnowzone.com](http://www.madridsnowzone.com) for more information.**

**Sierra de Béjar.** This quiet resort is situated just 220km from the centre of Madrid, and features slopes that are perfect for the wobbly beginner — advanced skiers might get bored, however. **See [www.sierradebejar-lacovatilla.com](http://www.sierradebejar-lacovatilla.com) for more information. Bus: Madrid-Béjar-Aldanueva from Estación Sur. Driving: take the A-6 towards Segovia to AP-51 to N-110 to CL-500 towards La Covatilla.**

**La Pinilla.** It's best to set out at the crack of dawn to avoid traffic and crowds at La Pinilla. Once there, it feels like a different world, with pure, clean air to inhale and semi-fresh snow to crunch on. Although it's no mission to the Alps, La Pinilla features 22 slopes of varying levels. The runs are short and sweet, and can get pretty packed with fellow skiers, so it's worth it to wear a helmet lest someone try to take you out. And because the slopes get hard and sticky from being squashed and sculpted by storms and keen skiers, it's a good idea to give your gear a service before your trip and get those snowboard or ski edges sharpened. If you don't have your own gear, there are plenty of rental shops around the stations; just make sure you get in the queue quickly to



return it all at the end of the day, otherwise you'll face a long wait. A day pass will cost you about €25. **See [www.lapinilla.es](http://www.lapinilla.es) for more information.**

**Bus: La Pinilla bus from Plaza Castilla. Driving: take the A-1 towards Rlaza/Soria and continue on the N-110; take the SG-116 towards La Pinilla.**

**Navacerrada.** The closest ski spot to the capital, Navacerrada is home to 16 ski runs for skiers and boarders alike. Located in the central region with La Pinilla, expect similar weather conditions and traffic jams. But the same breathtaking views also await you. **See [www.puertonavacerrada.com](http://www.puertonavacerrada.com) for more information. Bus: Navacerrada route from Moncloa. Train: Chamartín to Cercedilla, then catch train to Puerto de Cotos C-9, which stops at Navacerrada. Driving: Take the A-6 to Collado Villalba; continue on the M-601 Madrid-Segovia to Puerto de Navacerrada.** ■ NATASHA GRAY

# ad directory

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Funiversal is a bustling agency with staff from all over the world. Being a cosmopolitan crew, they have personal experience of arriving in a strange country with a different culture, traditions and language, and can help you with any associated problems you might have. Whether you want a pre-planned tour or a customised itinerary, they can design a holiday to suit you. They also have great deals on flight tickets, accommodation and car rentals. All the staff speak English.

**Funiversal Travel, c/Orellana, 3, tel: 91 319 85 68**  
(Metro: *Alonso Martínez*). Open: *Mon-Fri, 10am-8pm; Sat, 10am-1pm. www.funiversal.com. (See ad p66)*



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# MADRID ON THE NET

### [www.madrid.org](http://www.madrid.org)

The website for the regional government (comunidad).

### [www.munimadrid.es](http://www.munimadrid.es)

The website for the Madrid city council (ayuntamiento).

### [www.welcometomadrid.org](http://www.welcometomadrid.org)

For information on tourism, accommodation, museums or business look no further than this one-stop site.

### [www.qdq.com](http://www.qdq.com)

Head to this site if you need to find an address or plan a journey. Enter an address and a graphic map complete with photo will appear.

### [www.madridman.com](http://www.madridman.com)

This American is crazy about

Madrid, and has put all the information about the city you could ever need on his website.

### <http://madrid.craigslist.org>

The famous online classifieds service comes to Madrid, perfect for flat-hunting or shopping for second-hand goods.

### [www.notesfromspain.com](http://www.notesfromspain.com)

Podcasts and lively online chat about life in Spain from husband-and-wife team Ben and Marina.

### [www.justanded.com](http://www.justanded.com)

Packed with practical information that will help you find out how to call home cheaply, apply for a visa, learn Spanish, find a job and lots more.

### [www.softguides.com/madrid](http://www.softguides.com/madrid)

An authoritative and thorough guide to everything you need to know about living in the city.

### [www.lecool.com](http://www.lecool.com)

Register at lecool and you'll get all the information about the week's events delivered straight to your inbox.

### [www.guladeloclo.com/madrid](http://www.guladeloclo.com/madrid)

The online version of Madrid's weekly "what's on" guide, taking in exhibitions, nightlife, concerts, restaurants, cinema and theatre. [www.madaboutmadrid.com](http://www.madaboutmadrid.com) Listings, tourist information, cultural events and profiles of Madrileños, all put together by a chap in Wales!



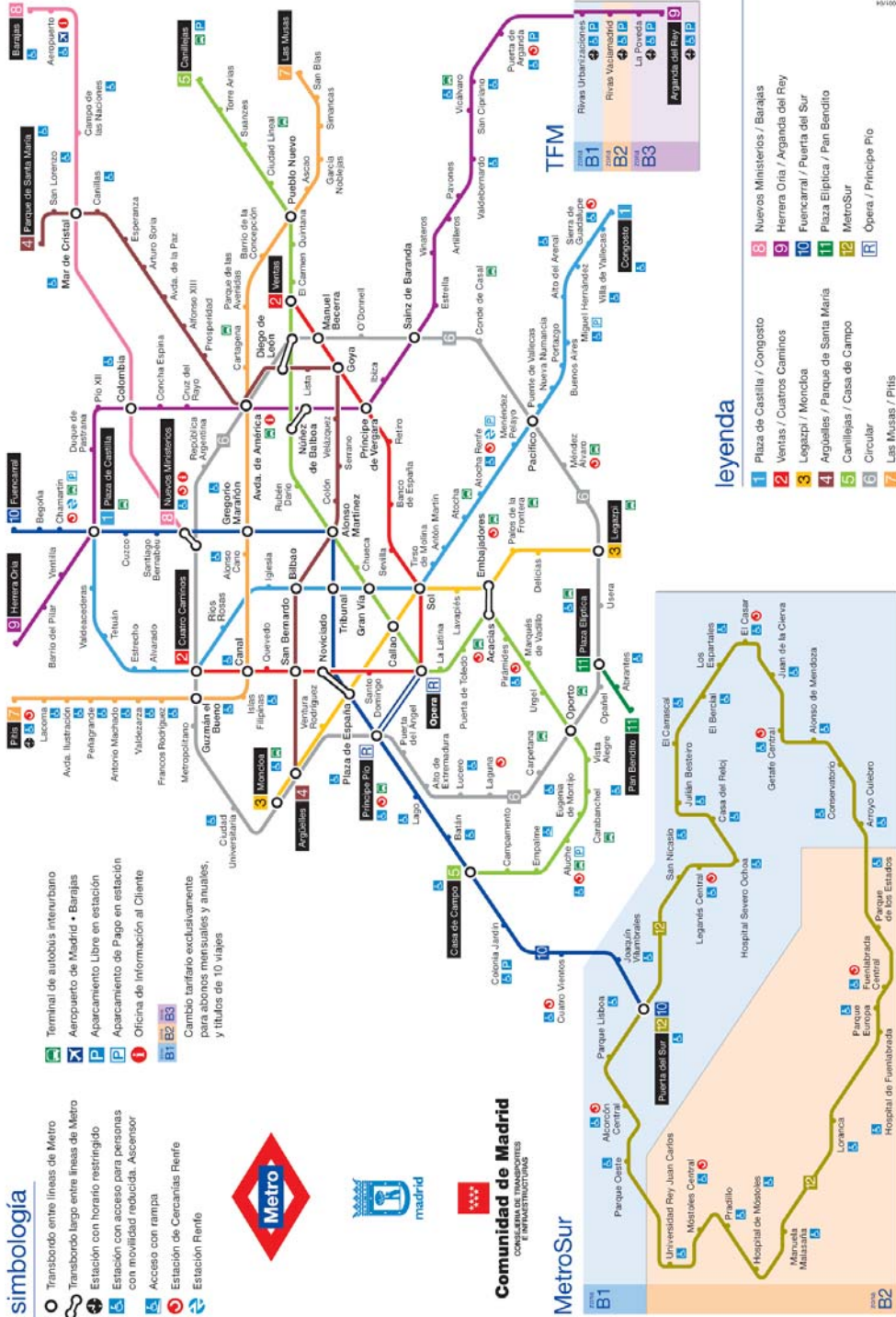
## simbología

- Transbordo entre líneas de Metro
  - Transbordo largo entre líneas de Metro
  - Estación con acceso restringido
  - Estación con acceso para personas con movilidad reducida. Ascensor
  - Acceso con rampa
  - Estación de Cercanías Renfe
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- 1 Plaza de Castilla / Congosto
- 2 Ventas / Cuartos Caminos
- 3 Legazpi / Moncloa
- 4 Argués / Parque de Santa María
- 5 Canillejas / Casa de Campo
- 6 Circular
- 7 Las Musas / Pitis
- 8 Nuevos Ministerios / Barajas
- 9 Herrera Oria / Arganda del Rey
- 10 Fuencarral / Puerta del Sur
- 11 Argués / Parque de Santa María
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