

CUT-OUT-AND-GO GUIDE | COOL MADRID



instant escapes

Cool Madrid

When the mercury rises, sit back, sip a sangria and take it slow...

Madrid's summer is a scorcher, so you'll need to learn to stay chilled. That means knowing when to move and when to take cover. It means knowing where to find shade and stillness. But it also means knowing the hippest places to hang out — because staying cool in this city is about more than body temperature. By Chris Haslam



SEE & DO

In El Retiro, Madrid has one of Europe's most beautiful parks — a lush garden of expensive topiary, clipped lawns, mirror lakes and cool shade (1 on map). All you need for an afternoon is a picnic. Grab jamón and Manchego cheese at the Mercado de San Miguel (Plaza de San Miguel; 2), then locate the Palacio de Cristal — a glass palace beside an ornamental lake with a fountain. Stake a claim on the grass, eat, drink and drift away (esmadrid.com; free; 3).

You'll learn more about Madrileño life over an afternoon of Tinto de Verano (red wine and lemonade) than on any sweaty guided neighbourhood tour. Head to the buzz of the historic La Latina district for a shady terrace table — try La Campana (Calle Botoneras 6; 4) for its calamari sandwiches (£2.50).

You probably should see the Prado — it being one of the world's great art museums and all — but there's no need to slog through it. Do it in one easy hour after 6pm (5pm Sundays), when entry is free. Go straight upstairs to room 12 for the most important work: Las Meninas by Velázquez. Next, head to room 27, for Titian's square-jawed Charles V at the Battle of Mühlberg; then 29 for The Three Graces by Rubens, 16b for Rembrandt's Judith at the Banquet of Holofernes and 8b for El Greco's Nobleman. Now head downstairs to room 56a for Bosch's Garden of Earthly Delights. Finally, see

Sun's out: street life in Madrid; below, sunset at the ancient Egyptian temple, Debod; Calle Cava Baja in party central, La Latina

Goya's horrific The 3rd of May 1808 in room 64 (museodelprado.es; £13; 5).

Madrileños are known as 'gatos' — or cats — so it's not that surprising that they head skywards on scorching evenings to drink and devour views of the city. Sometimes there's dancing, but few can be bothered to move much. The most fun — with cinema, music and performance art — is on the roof of La Casa Encendida cultural centre, near Embajadores Metro (lacasaencendida.es; free entry, ticketed events from £2.50; 6).

It's best to arrive early at the Sunday flea market El Rastro (7), in the La Latina district. This being Madrid, that's a laid-back 10am. The main drag — scruffy Calle Ribera de Curtidores — sells mostly tat. The real treasures are hidden in shady side streets such as Calle de Carlos Arniches, in dusty junk shops. If you persist, you could get, say, 15 per cent off Bakelite, vinyl and retro designer pieces such as a '50s Formica kitchen table — although they won't let you take it as hand baggage on Ryanair.

Need to cool down fast? Head north to the huge pool at the Vicente del Bosque sports centre, a distinctly urban setting overlooked by the commercial district's Four Towers. It's a traditional Madrileño day out: Metro 10 to Begoña, 10-minute walk to the sports centre, towel on the lawn, splash into the pool — a giant slab of municipal turquoise — and chill (www.barridelpilar.com; £3.90; 8).

The 21°C galleries of Reina Sofia, the modern art museum, are bliss in the heat (museoreinasofia.es; £9). Better yet, the only piece you need to see here is Picasso's Guernica, so you can spend half your time chilling in the foliage-lined restaurant, Arzábal (00 34 915 286828; mains about £20; 9).

Sweet relief comes at sunset. Locals take their country cousins up Metro line 3 to the Plaza de España and Madrid's ancient Egyptian temple, Debod (esmadrid.com; 10), a gift to the city from President Nasser. High above the city, it's a tranquil, airy spot to watch the changing light across Madrid as the sun drops behind the distant peaks of the Sierra Oeste. >

POST-PRADO PRIZE
After all that art, you've earned a drink. Make a beeline for nearby Los Gatos (Calle de Jesús 2) — Madrid's most chilled-out tapas joint is the perfect place to recover from your whirlwind visit



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EAT

I Dinner and a show

PLATEA (Prices vary)

Because: This former cinema off the Plaza de Colón is the biggest food and entertainment emporium in Europe. Travel's tip: Headline acts take the stage at 9:30pm, and you can see the show for the price of a drink (from £3). Calle de Goya 5-7; 00 34 915 770025, plateamadrid.com; ①.

I Communal dining
MERCADO DE SAN ANTON
(Prices vary)

Because: On Saturday afternoons, it feels as if all of Madrid is here, browsing around food stalls, eating tapas and hanging out on the roof terrace. Travel's tip: If you spot a table outside, pounce. Calle de Augusto Figueroa 24; 00 34 913 300730, mercadosananton.com; ⑫.

I The local secret
RECRCO (Mains about £13)

Because: The chefs at this taberna have worked at Michelin-starred Mugaritz and the Fat Duck. Expect fried aubergine with jamón or sautéed broccoli with kimchi and smoked cumin juice. Travel's tip: If you can't get a reservation, try your luck early on Saturday lunchtime. Calle de Espartinas 5; 00 34 910 334379, recreoespartinas.com; ⑬.

I For everyman
CAFE COMERCIAL (Mains about £17)

Because: At Madrid's oldest cafe, white-jacketed waiters have served everyone from taxi drivers to literary heavyweights, including Antonio Machado. Travel's tip: If you can't go for dinner, go for breakfast. Order the torrijas (£4), Madrileño egg bread that's the house speciality here. Glorieta de Bilbao 7; 00 34 910 882525, cafecomercialmadrid.com; ⑭.

I The critic's choice
SANTCELONI (Mains about £52)

Because: Come to this two-Michelin-starred restaurant for chef Oscar Velasco's 14-course tasting menu, featuring eel soup, candied turbot and shoulder of kid (£152pp). Travel's tip: The additional wine pairing option (£100pp) is overpriced. Ask the sommelier to recommend a bottle. Paseo de la Castellana 57; 00 34 912 108840, restaurantesantceloni.com; ⑮.

SHOP & DRINK

I The on-trend togs spot

MALABABA

Because: The city's hottest shopping district is Chueca, and Malababa's flagship store, selling Madrid-designed accessories and homewares, epitomises the quarter. Travel's tip: Don't just come to shop; Chueca is also a buzzing, Soho-style party area. Calle Santa Teresa 5; malababa.com; ⑯.

I The extra-virgin shop
PATRIMONIO COMUNAL OLIVARERO

Because: The Spanish Ministry of Agriculture's olive-oil showcase can arrange delivery of fine olive oils from 10 production areas. Travel's tip: Look out for the pale-gold Venta del Barón from Córdoba (£10.50 for 50cl). Mejía Lequerica 1; patrimonioolivareo.com; ⑰.

I The rebel's bar
FABRICA MARAVILLAS

Because: Malasaña has the best nightlife in town, and Fábrica Maravillas is the place to start — it has terrific craft beers. Travel's tip: Drop into Toni 2 (Calle del Almirante 9; ⑱) for a pre-dawn singalong around the piano. Calle de Valverde 29; fmaravillas.com; ⑲.

ASK THE LOCAL

Antonio Ruiz Saboya plays guitar for the Madrid band *Mechanismo* and works for the tour operator *Corazón Travel* (corazontravel.com)

“Get your sightseeing done early, have a long lunch, sleep all afternoon and go out at sunset. In Malasaña, head to turn-of-the-century *La Ardosia* (laardosa.es; mains about £10; ⑳) for its cooling *salmorejo* — like gazpacho, but better. Push through the sweaty mob and crawl under the right-hand end of the bar, and you'll find an airy private room. Not far away is the chilled cavern that is the *Iglesia de San Antonio de los Alemanes* (Calle de la Puebla 22; £1.70; ㉑) with its fabulous frescoes. Or wander the cool galleries of the world's second-biggest private art collection at the *Thyssen* (museothyssen.org; ㉒). It's free on Mondays 12pm-4pm.

JUST ROUND THE CORNER

Shopaholic? While in the area, also check out designer boutiques *Trá Madrid* (Calle Pelayo 52) and *Sonámbula* (Calle Barquillo 26). And the fabulous shoe shops on the Calle Augusto Figueroa

HIT THE ROOF

On the third floor, restaurant *La Cocina de San Antón* is owned by *Cinco Jotas*, makers of the finest jamón in Spain. A media ración (40g) is £12.50

WRITER'S TIP

The '30s-themed restaurant upstairs is pretty smart (dress up). Downstairs is more casual



STAY

I The city-centre bargain

HOSTAL LISBOA (Doubles from £42, room only)

Because: It's cheap and perfectly located not just for the Prado, Reina Sofia and Thyssen-Bornemisza museums, but also for *Cardamomo* (cardamomo.com) and *El Callejon* (00 34 914 298397) — the two best flamenco joints in town. Travel's tip: It can be noisy until 3am at weekends; bring earplugs. Calle Ventura de la Vega 17; 00 34 914 294676, hostallisboa.com; ㉓.

I The party place
POSADA DEL LEON DE ORO
(Doubles from £104, room only)

Because: This 19th-century coaching inn is on Calle Cava Baja, bang in the heart of La Latina's party district, with a cracking tapas bar and rooms that combine modern design with old-world charm. Travel's tip: Go for a balcony room overlooking the Cava Baja and don't fret about late-night noise from Madrid's busiest party street: these rooms are superbly soundproofed.

Calle Cava Baja 12; 00 34 911 191494, posadadelleondeoro.com; ㉔.

I The shopaholic base camp
TOTEM (Doubles from £138, room only)

Because: If you're shopping in posh Salamanca, you need a palace of discreet luxury with a decent cocktail bar in which to deposit your designer shopping bags. *Tótem* is stylish without being blingy, with super-friendly staff. Travel's tip: Standard doubles are tiny, so upgrade to a deluxe exterior overlooking the quiet, leafy street. Calle de Herosilla 23; 00 34 914 260035, totem-madrid.com; ㉕.

I The gossip shop
ONLY YOU (Doubles from £138, room only)

Because: It's a designer boutique hotel in the heart of cool Chueca, just north of the Gran Vía and five minutes from vibrant Malasaña. The cream-and-blue rooms are big for Madrid and have A-list bathrooms. Downstairs, a grown-up cocktail bar is popular with the city's arts and media crowd. Travel's tip: Deluxe



Showtime: clockwise from top left, there's an extensive culinary and musical line-up at former cinema *Platea*; *Tótem's* cocktail bar; the cool *Hotel Urban*; craft beers at *Fábrica Maravillas*; flambéed mackerel, caviar, cauliflower and apple jelly at *Santceloni*

HOTTEST SEAT

Grab a spot at the bar in the cocktail lounge, and let barman *Alejandro Coca* discreetly dish the goss on the celeb guests

rooms overlook the building's central void. The premium rooms cost about £40 more, but come with Juliet balconies overlooking the street. It's money well spent. Calle del Barquillo 21; 00 34 910 052222, onlyyouhotels.com; ㉖.

I The height of fashion
HOTEL URBAN (Doubles from £162, room only)

Because: This palatial hotel is minutes from the grand Puerta del Sol square, has ancient art in every room, avant-garde furnishings and Madrid's hippest roof terrace. Travel's tip: Coolest place in Madrid for your siesta? On a designer lounge beside the rooftop pool. Carrera de San Jerónimo 34; 00 34 917 877770, hotelurban.com; ㉗.

I The grande dame
HOTEL RITZ (Doubles from £266, room only)

Because: It's as though the 21st century never happened in Madrid's most venerable hotel, right next to the Prado. Black ties at breakfast, hushed reverence, carpets thicker than clouds,

antique-furnished rooms and the *Krug Bar*, selling *Grand Cuvée* for £44 a glass. Travel's tip: The concierge is called *Jesús*. If you need front-row seats at secret flamenco shows or VIP Prado tours, he performs miracles. Plaza de la Lealtad 5; 00 34 917 016767, mandarinoriental.com/ritzmadrid; ㉘.

GET ME THERE
GO INDEPENDENT

Ryanair (ryanair.com) flies to Madrid from Stansted, Manchester, Birmingham and Newcastle, from £44 return. Other options include *BA* (ba.com), from £80; *EasyJet* (easyjet.com), from £50; *Iberia* (iberia.com), from £69; and *Norwegian* (norwegian.com), from £62.

GO PACKAGED
Thomas Cook City Escapes (01733 224808, thomascook.com) has three nights at a three-star five minutes from Plaza de España, from £295pp, B&B, with Stansted flights on *Ryanair*.

FURTHER INFORMATION
See esmadrid.com. ■

PHOTOGRAPHS: 4CORNERS, ALAMY, MAP: MAIDENHEAD CARTOGRAPHIC