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TRAVEL | Updated May 3, 2013, 3:19 p.m. ET

Insider's Travel Guide to Madrid

To fully experience Spain's refined yet easygoing capital, pack your party shoes—and your eating pants



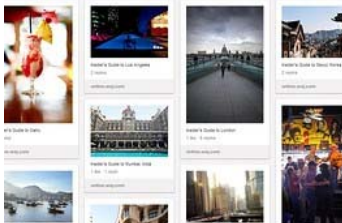
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Alvaro Leiva for The Wall Street Journal

el Retiro Park

AFTER SPENDING a few days and (usually very) long nights in Madrid, you'll wonder why everyone tells you to go to Barcelona instead. The latter city has Gaudí and the seaside, but Madrid is truly the beating heart of Spain.

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The seat of the government and the monarchy, Madrid is the third most populous city in the European Union. But it feels intimate and genteel, with an old-world elegance that is mostly gone from this earth. Every place you visit, from the gardens—one several times the size of Central Park—to the museums (the Prado and the Thyssen-Bornemisza have some of the world's most impressive court portraiture collections), you can practically hear the whispers of kings and queens long gone. And you might spot their descendants, alive and at play, in the city's smattering of old-fashioned restaurants and deliriously fun nightclubs.

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Five Stocks Handled the Heavy Lifting

Five blue-chip stocks have accounted for about one-third of the rally in the Dow since the financial crisis.

The Power of Negative Thinking

Technology Shapes Kenyan Elections

The Internet and social media in Kenya, which played a central role in this year's elections by allowing Kenyans to question candidates, took on a new function Tuesday—spreading messages of peace to avert new bloodshed.

Beijing, U.S. Unveil New Korean Sanctions

The U.S. and China introduced a new round of sanctions against North Korea at the United Nations that the U.S. said would significantly impede the development of Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs, in response to its test last month of an atomic bomb.

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Rajoy. But with the confidence that stems from a long and distinguished lineage, the city soldiers on.

Madrid is going through a period of political and financial turmoil not experienced in decades. There are no far, mostly peaceful street protests against everything from unemployment (the jobless rate currently hovers around 27%) to the economic policies of Prime Minister Mariano

Photos: Madrid, Spain



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Alvaro Leiva for The Wall Street Journal

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local soccer rival Atlético de Madrid.

More importantly, famous matadors descend on the city to fight at Las Ventas, the largest and most revered bullfighting ring in the country. Get tickets in advance, shout "olé!" with the dominantly Spanish crowd and see why Ava Gardner fell in love with a toreador. Then take a travel tip from "Death in the Afternoon," Ernest Hemingway's ode to bullfighting: "Nobody goes to bed in Madrid until they have killed the night."

—Alexa Brazilian

The Experts



The Decorator
Lorenzo Castillo

The Aristocrat
Duke Rafael de Medina Abascal

The Chef
Ramón Freixa

The Tastemaker
Carolina Herrera de Baez

The Decorator

Lorenzo Castillo

Native Madrileño whose design projects include the city's AC Santo Mauro Hotel

Power Lunch // El Quëenco de Pepa. Serving traditional cuisine, it's famous for harvesting its own vegetables, including tomatoes and delicious artichokes. The crème de la crème of Madrid society dines there. *Henri Dunant, 21-23; [quenco.com](#)*

Enchanted Evening // El Landó. This restaurant is reminiscent of what Spain once was. The waiters wear white uniforms, the décor is all woodwork and wall sconces. The meat entrees are excellent and their stews are superb. It's a personal favorite of our king. *Plaza Gabriel Miró, 8; [casalucio.es](#)*

Star-Studded Cocktails // Museo Chicote. For after-dinner drinks, follow in the footsteps of two Americans forever linked to Spain: Ernest Hemingway and Ava Gardner. They both frequented Chicote, a 1930s bar on the Gran Vía, a Spanish version of Broadway. *Gran Vía, 12; [museo-chicote.com](#)*

Local's Museum // Museo Cerralbo. A Madrid insider cannot be worthy of that name without recommending this museum near the Plaza de España. It houses what was the personal collection of the 17th Marquis of Cerralbo—everything from sculptures and paintings to coin collections and tapestries. *Ventura Rodríguez, 17;*



A Colorado Brewer Mixes
Conquering the Beast
Exercise With Beer
The Roaring Riviera



Australia Offers Visa for
Millionaires

Trending Now

4

Australia Attracts Chinese
Multimillionaires



What's This?

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Virus's Toll in Saudi Arabia Raises
Fears of Faster Spread

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U.S. Says China's Government,
Military Used Cyberespionage

7

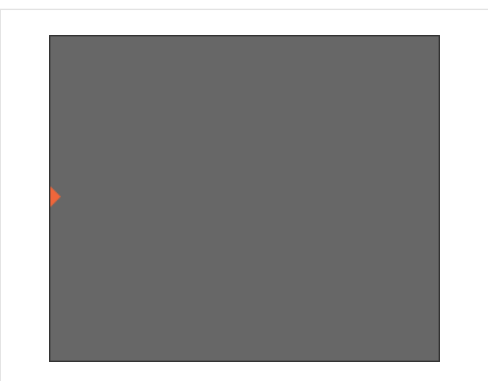
Airman in Charge of Sexual Assault
Unit Charged

8



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Fabulous Flea // El Rastro. On weekends I love to shop in the barrio de La Latina. It has antique shops and a Sunday flea market. Afterward, enjoy tapas at El Viajero. *El Rastro: Plaza de Cascorro; El Viajero: Plaza de la Cebada, 11;* www.elviajeromadrid.com

The Aristocrat

Duke Rafael de Medina Abascal

Founder of Madrid-based menswear brand Scalpers; a descendant of King Ferdinand I of Aragon

Palatial Park // Casa de Campo. This is an enormous park in western Madrid—it is several times the size of Central Park in New York. It used to be the royal hunting estate; now it is a great place to walk, run or bike around. I trained there when I was preparing for the New York City Marathon a few years ago.

Culinary Bazaar // Mercado de San Miguel. A covered market that is open all day long and has bars and lots of stands selling tapas, fruit, vegetables and seafood. You can buy and consume everything there—or at home. *Plaza de San Miguel;* mercadodesanmiguel.es

Best Bar // Válgame Dios. This is a bar and cafe in Chueca that is full every night with Madrid scenesters, including movie stars. You go there to see and be seen. *Calle de Augusto Figueroa, 43; 34-91-701-0341*

Dinner Theater // Bar Tomate. A cool place with a simple design where you can have good food all day. At night they play music, so it's also a great place to hang out after dinner. *Calle de Fernando El Santo, 26; grupotragaluz.com*

Chic Shop // Just One. It's the best multibrand store in town, full of cool European labels like Cesare Attolini, Sartorio, [Brunello Cucinelli](http://BrunelloCucinelli.com) BC.MI -0.06% and Cruciani. In addition, their own collection of ties and pashminas is beautiful. *Calle Villanueva, 28; www.justone.es*

The Chef

Ramón Freixa

Owner and chef of the two-Michelin-starred Ramón Freixa in Madrid and three other restaurants in Spain

Gastro Bar // Le Cabrera. I eat here after going to the cinema or theater, or even when I finish working at my restaurant. I am thrilled by the bravas fries and the chicken wings. *Calle de Doña Bárbara de Braganza, 2; lecabrera.com*

Pantry Purveyor // Delishop. This is a gourmet shop that sells every kind of food for your kitchen. One recently opened in the Salamanca neighborhood. *Multiple locations, including Calle Argensola, 16; delishop.es*

Magic Martini // Gran Meliá Fénix hotel's Dry Cosmopolitan Bar. For a perfect cocktail, I recommend the dry martini created by Javier de las Muelas, probably the most famous cocktail man in Spain. The bar has a digital counter that keeps track of drinks, and they've logged every martini sold in the bar. If you purchase one, you receive a certificate documenting the number. *Calle Hermosilla, 2; melia.com*

Sunday Spot // Luzi Bombón. This is the ideal place to go with friends on the weekend. It's a modern brasserie in the middle of the Castellana with enormous windows, high ceilings and a modern décor. I recommend the oysters and the royal crab as starters. *Paseo de la Castellana, 35; grupotragaluz.com*

Show Time // Microteatro Por Dinero. When I'm in the Malasaña neighborhood, I like to see a short play. *Calle Loreto y Chicote, 9; teatropordinero.com*

The Tastemaker

Carolina Herrera de Baez

Creative director of Carolina Herrera fragrances; Madrid resident

Green Go-To // El Retiro Park. A walk in the park is one of my favorite things to do

in Madrid; this one is walking distance from my home. I enjoy going with my children to play. The main entrance is Alcalá gate, near the Plaza de la Independencia.

Homey Haunt // Murillo Café. To meet with friends, I go to Murillo. The food is delicious and the space is so cozy. I love the mini hamburgers, the tuna carpaccio and the "ladies lunch" (thin, grilled chicken paillard with arugula and cherry tomatoes). The natural juice special of the day is great. I especially like the maracuyá (passion fruit). *Ruiz de Alarcon, 27; murillocafe.com*

Best Hotel // Casa de Madrid. Whenever a dear friend comes to visit, I recommend this small, unique hotel right next to the opera, the Royal Palace and Plaza Mayor. It's so charming and just like home. *Calle de Arrieta, 2; casademadrid.com*

Walking Shoes // Castañer. The best women's espadrilles are from Castañer. They are so chic and so comfortable. *Several locations, including Calle Almirante, 24; castaner.com*

Haute Décor // Isabel López-Quesada and Federica & Co. // The showroom of Isabel López-Quesada is a great place for furniture and unique pieces. I love Federica & Co. for antique items. *Isabel López-Quesada: Calle Alfonso Rodríguez Santamaria, 22; isabellopezquesada.com. Federica & Co., Hermosilla, 26; federicaandco.com*



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Plus Don't Miss...

Pedro Almodóvar's films Before you jet, download a few of the Madrid local's movies to watch on the plane. Most of Mr. Almodóvar's films are set in the city, including the Oscar-nominated "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" and the Oscar-winning "Talk to Her." // **Viva Madrid** This tiny

watering hole tucked away near the Puerta del Sol offers a deadly but delicious gin and tonic, house-made potato chips and fun '90s and early '00s pop music.

grupotartufo.es // **Matadero Madrid** This slaughterhouse-turned-contemporary-art-center is located inside Madrid Río, a new park that meanders along the Manzanares river. mataderomadrid.org

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