



MADRID, SPAIN

Factsheet 2024

CULTURAL ASPECTS

COMPREHENSIVE EXPERIENCE AND VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES

Madrid is the perfect mix of the traditional and modern! The city is very lively and offers a wide range of activities every day, at any time of the day or night. In Madrid, you can experience the best Spain has to offer; from language to gastronomy, culture and entertainment.

SOCIAL CULTURE

Spanish people are known for being friendly and for spending lots of time socializing. It is very common for friends to sit for long hours in the late afternoon chatting over coffee or drinking beer/wine. It is easy to find a variety of types of food in the city, however meat is a staple in the diet as Spain is known for its tapas and jamón ibérico. You may find it very difficult to resist different tapas as food is also always included in any kind of social gathering! It is common to eat dinner between 8:30 pm and 11 pm. Most restaurants will open at about 8 pm and serve food until 1 am.

GREETINGS

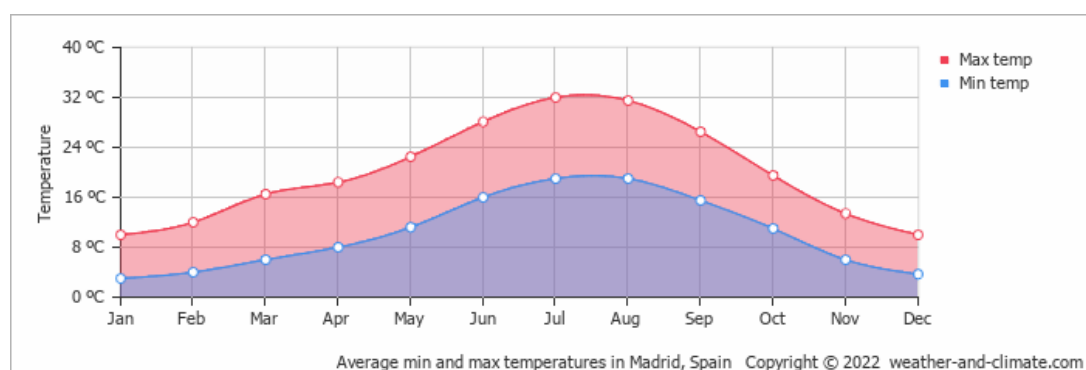
Spaniards tend to be affectionate between friends, family members, partners, and even people they just meet. It is customary to exchange kisses both on the right and left cheek when greeting others, so don't be alarmed if your new Spanish friends greet you this way.

ARRIVING LATE IS OKAY

It is customary for Spaniards to arrive a bit late to social gatherings. For those who are used to an organized, on-the-go lifestyle, it may take some time to adapt to the more relaxed Spanish way of life.

CLIMATE

Madrid will surprise you with its intense, enveloping blue sky. With a dry [climate](#) and little rainfall, the city has hot summers and cold winters. No matter what time of the year you choose to come, you're very likely to see with your own eyes the deep blue sky Velázquez loved to paint!



LANGUAGE

In Madrid, the language that's spoken is Castellano. Castellano is one of four official languages in Spain and is spoken throughout the country. You can hear it in music, movies and on TV. The local accent in Madrid is really clear, so you should have no problem understanding it.

LOCAL TERMS TO KNOW

- **Tapa(s)** – is an appetizer or snack and translates to a small portion of any kind of Spanish cuisine.
- **Caña** – a beer (a half pint) or caña pequeña (a quarter pint)
- **Birra** – beer!
- **Garito** – a bar or a pub
- **Vale** - Popular way to say okay or understood
- **Me mola / flipa** - Molar and flipar mean to be great, awesome, amazing. So if you have a favorite place, you might say, "Me mola mucho este lugar."
- **Me renta (mazo)** – The same as the previous example with an addition! Mazo means "a lot"!
- **Un Tío / Una Tía** - Technically the Spanish word for "uncle", but colloquially used as the word "dude" and is used typically when telling a story.
- **Picar algo** – grab something to eat
- **Ir a pachas** – splitting the bill
- **Chupao** – something really easy, a piece of cake!
- **Te dan las uvas** – hurry up! This expression comes from a New Year celebration tradition, check it out [here](#)

THINGS TO SEE IN MADRID

5 Sights to See:

- Cibeles Fountain - This wonderful fountain at the start of the Art Walk is one of Madrid's most renowned icons.
- Plaza Mayor - Madrid's grand central square is found in the heart of Hapsburg Madrid, the oldest part of the city.
- Puerta del Sol - This bustling square located in the center of Madrid is one of the city's most famous sites.
- Royal Palace - The largest royal palace in Western Europe
- Prado, Reina Sofia and Thyssen-Bornemisza Museums

5 Things To Do:

- Explore the fashion boutiques and restaurants in Salamanca neighborhood
- Visit Las Ventas, one of the most important bullrings in the country
- Hop on the Madrid Cable Car and enjoy the picturesque ride
- Enjoy crazy rides in Casa de Campo amusement park
- Visit the large ZOO park and see the dolphin show

5 Cultural Activities:

- Buy tickets for ballet or opera in Teatro Real
- Do some Sunday morning shopping at the authentic open-air market Rastro
- Visit Sorolla Museum set in his former family home
- Visit Matadero Madrid, old slaughter house turned into a small culture city
- Watch a beautiful sunset with a city view at Egyptian Temple of Debod

5 Nights Out:

- Sip cocktails in one of many breathtaking rooftop bars in the city center
- Watch a Flamenco show or, better yet, take a Flamenco class!
- Dance until dawn at nightclubs like Teatro Kapital or El Sol
- Take a short salsa and bachata class (and party after) in many bars or clubs
- Eat delicious churros at the historic Chocolatería San Ginés

5 Sports Activities:

- Watch Real Madrid soccer game at the famous Santiago Bernabéu Stadium
- Take a boat ride on the Retiro Park lake
- Take a day to explore Casa de Campo park
- Cycle your way through Madrid's several Vias Verdes or Green Routes
- Do the tour of Gran Vía shops and boutiques (yes, it counts as sport)

5 Sights Outside of Madrid:

- Organize a one-day-trip to Toledo, a small town with a rich history
- Take a 2-hour train ride to Valencia and enjoy the sea
- Visit El Escorial, the former residence of the Spanish Kings
- Take a bus ride to Alcalá de Henares, hometown of Miguel de Cervantes

- Visit Guadarrama Natural park and explore the mountain range

HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS

Spain and the Madrid region celebrate a diverse range of annual festivals throughout the year. They range from traditional to contemporary and no matter when you plan your trip, there is always something going on. Here are just a few of the bigger ones:

| MONTH | FESTIVALS |
|----------------|--|
| January | The Three Kings - Los Reyes Magos |
| February/March | Carnival |
| April | Holy Week Parade |
| May | Dos de Mayo Festival of San Isidro |
| June/July | Corpus Christi Madrid Pride Week Flamenco Festival |
| August | San Cayetano San Lorenzo The Festival of Virgin Paloma |
| September | Vogue Fashion's Night Out |
| October | Festival de Otoño Columbus Day - National Day of Spain |
| November | Halloween -Día de los muertos Virgin Almudena Day |
| December | Nochevieja |

Other Useful Information

SAFETY

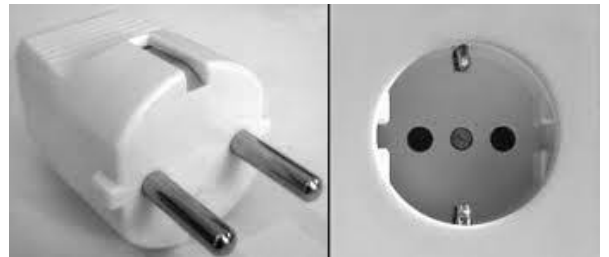
Madrid is a very safe city in Europe. Nonetheless, students should practice street smarts to avoid any potential problems. Expanish conducts a safety orientation

on the first day of classes to help keep students safe and healthy during their program. Here are some quick safety tips:

- Use a money belt for important documents and large amounts of cash.
- Carry a photocopy of passport at all times while leaving the original in a safe place.
- Be weary of pickpockets in crowded areas and on public transportation.
- Becoming intoxicated while out in the city makes students an easier target for thieves, so we advise students to drink moderately.

ELECTRICITY

Spain uses 2 pronged round European plugs with 220 volts at 50 hertz. You can buy electrical adapters/converters at most hardware stores, pharmacies, and travel stores.



STUDENT BUDGET

We understand that making a budget is an important step when planning your client's trip. In general, we recommend students to budget **200€ per week** for meals, snacks, cell phone data, transportation and miscellaneous incidentals.

TIPPING

Tipping, although modest, is considered polite. It is custom to leave the small change behind to tour up to the nearest Euro or even at an extra Euro or two if the service was especially good. At upscale restaurants, tipping can be expected and is usually around 10%.

Note: Taxis are not customarily given a tip.

CURRENCY

The currency in Spain is of course the Euro (€). It is always handy to have a bit of cash in euros when traveling but students can also easily use credit and debit cards at most grocery stores, restaurants and businesses.

INTERNET

Wi-Fi is available for free almost anywhere in the city. Expanish has free Wi-Fi, our housing has guaranteed free Wi-Fi, most restaurants have free Wi-Fi and now public spaces do as well (parks, subway and bus stops, etc.).

CELL PHONES

Expanish recommends that students bring an unlocked cell phone with them and just purchase a local SIM card for their phone. This costs around 15€ and includes data in an initial package.

POSTAL SERVICES

If students would like to receive mail while abroad, please provide any friends and family with our Expanish office address. All mail can be sent to:

Attn: Student Name
c/o Expanish
Calle de Castelló, 23
28001 Madrid
Spain

Please be advised that most larger packages may be held at customs where it can be time-consuming to obtain, so Expanish only recommends receiving letters and postcards.

TRANSPORTATION

The public transportation in Madrid is fantastic. Public buses run 24/7 and students can get anywhere in the city. There is also a subway system that runs from 6 am to 1:30 am and comes every 5 minutes or so. To use any public transportation, students will need a metrocard (price around 8,40€ per day), a rechargeable card that one swipes for both bus, train and subway. Public transportation can be paid for by the ride (1.5 – 2.0€ per ride).

SHOPPING

Retail stores are typically open:

- Monday to Friday – 10 am to 9 or 10 pm
- Saturday – 10 am to 9 or 10 pm
- Sunday – 10 am to 9 or 10 pm

Larger grocery stores are open 7 days per week as well as cafes and restaurants.

VISAS AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

For detailed visa requirements, please re-confirm information with your local Spanish embassy/consulate as they will be able to provide accurate and up-to-date visa information. Students are responsible for their own legal status while studying.

Students with European Union member passports can enter Spain for any length of time without a visa.

Non-European Union students with programs of less than 90 days should enter the country on a tourist visa. Requirements for the tourist visa varies by country and should be consulted with a local embassy/consulate.

Non-European Union students with programs of 90 days or more will need to obtain a student visa before departure. Expanish can provide an enrollment confirmation as part of the required documents. In order to emit the document, Expanish requires the full payment for the program (including document courier fee). Upon payment, we will emit an enrollment confirmation and send via courier directly to the student. The cancellation policy for denied visas or other reasons in this case can be found on our Terms & Conditions on our Price List. Visas typically take 8 weeks to process so students need to plan ahead. Visa information can be found on the Spanish Immigration website [HERE](#).