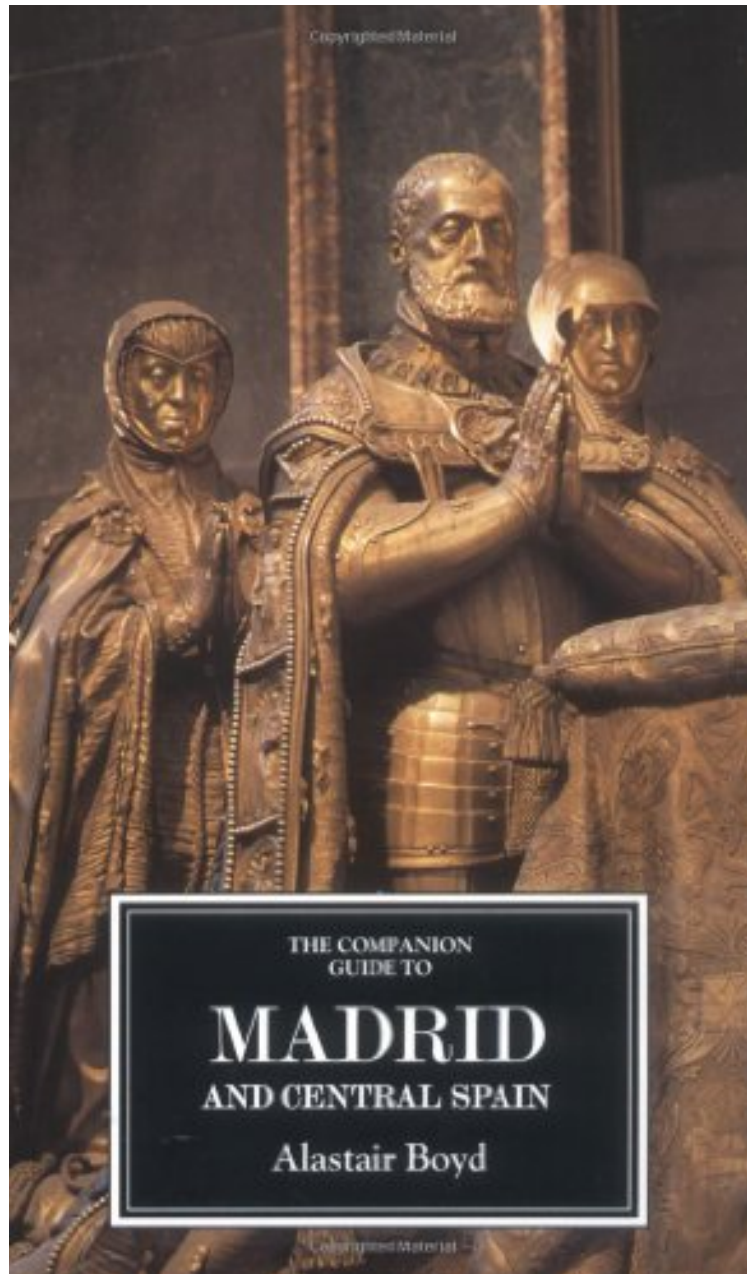


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The Companion Guide to Madrid and Central Spain (Companion Guides)

Alastair Boyd

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in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Companion Guide to Madrid and Central Spain* (Companion Guides):

This book performs with great thoroughness all the usual functions of a guidebook. But it is much more than a mere inventory of buildings, paintings, sculpture, routes and views, supplemented by appendices packed with practical information. The authors - from their long experience and deep knowledge of the country - are exceptionally well-equipped to draw together into a coherent whole all the threads of history, art, culture and recent developments. They steer you in most rewarding directions, enlivening the hallowed hush of museum or sacristy with an original interpretation of some great painter - El Greco, Goya, Picasso - or an observation which suddenly illuminates the seemingly unexceptional. Madrid, rather than just a political capital at the geographical centre of the country, is revealed as a true metropolis, genuinely representative of all the aspects and regional variations of Spanish life. Its art collections are justly renowned as superb. Add in the cluster of historical cities at an easy distance (including Segovia, Avila and Toledo), to say nothing of the lesser-known treasures and delights secreted in the heartlands of Castile, and you have, within a manageable compass, the core of Spanish civilisation.

The book gives an appetizing account of the cities and monuments within easy reach of Madrid (combining) practical detail with interpretation and background knowledge. --The Times Literary Supplement