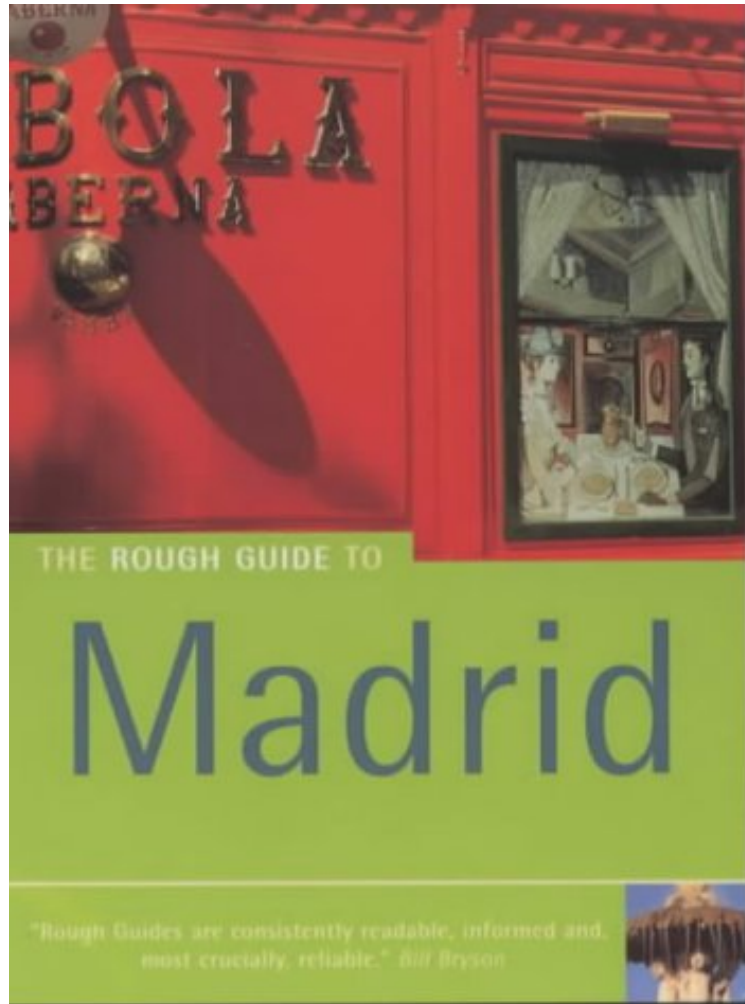


(Download free pdf) The Rough Guide to Madrid

The Rough Guide to Madrid

Simon Baskett

**Download PDF / ePub / DOC / audiobook / ebooks*



#2192802 in Books 2003-02-24 2003-02-24 Original language: English PDF # 1 5.72 x .77 x 4.14l, #File Name: 1858288916368 pages | File size: 46.Mb

Simon Baskett : The Rough Guide to Madrid before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Rough Guide to Madrid:

Written by a resident of the city, this guide to Madrid offers the reader a glimpse of the less well-known sights, as well as a guide to the leading tourist attractions. All the museums of this historic capital are reviewed and there is information on nearby sites, such as Toledo, Segovia, and the monastery-palace of El Escorial. Football, bars, accommodation and eating out are all covered, with additional sections on art, architecture and famous former residents, such as Goya. Containing similar information to the larger "Rough Guides", the pocket-sized guide is written in the irreverent style characteristic of the series.

About the Author Simon Baskett has lived and worked in Madrid for nine years, with his wife and young children. As well as updating the Rough Guide to Madrid, Simon does freelance travel and sports writing for the BBC, Reuters and Four Four Two magazine. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

WHAT TO SEE

As a tourist destination, Madrid has been greatly underrated. It may not boast the outstanding architectural riches of more historic cities in Spain, but it is home to three magnificent museums – the Prado, the Reina Sofía and the Thyssen-Bornemisza – which have long ensured the city a claim to the title of "European capital of art". Apart from these superlative collections, Madrid has a host of other attractions which, when combined with some of the best tapas in Spain, countless bars and legendary nightlife, make it easy to see why so many people get hooked when they visit. The layout of the city is pretty straightforward and the main sights are clustered in a very compact centre where you're likely to spend most of your time. At the heart of the city – and of Spain – is the Puerta del Sol and around it lie the oldest parts of the capital, neatly bordered to the west by the Río Manzanares, to the east by the park of El Retiro, and to the north by the city's great thoroughfare, the Gran Vía. Throughout the guide all street names are abbreviated, using c/ for calle (street) and omitting the articles "de", "de la", etc. Calle de Toledo, for example, is c/Toledo and Calle de la Libertad, c/Libertad. Although on Madrid street signs the full name is often used, Spaniards nearly always use the abbreviated form. The Prado, Thyssen-Bornemisza and Reina Sofía lie in a "golden triangle" just west of El Retiro along the Paseo del Prado, and are a must for anyone with even a passing interest in art. Over towards the river are the oldest, Habsburg, parts of town, centred on the touristy but beautiful arcaded Plaza Mayor, instigated by Spain's greatest king, Felipe II. The royal theme continues to the west of here with the impressive bulk of the Palacio Real (Royal Palace), while to the south lie the cosmopolitan barrios of La Latina and Lavapiés, with their fascinating history, myriad eating and drinking options, and the famous Rastro flea market. After Gran Vía with its cinemas, shops and monumental architecture, the most important streets are c/Mayor and its continuation c/Alcalá – which cut through the centre from the Palacio Real to Plaza de la Cibeles and are home to several quirkier shops and the fine art collections of the Real Academia de San Fernando – and the long south–north boulevard beginning as the elegant Paseo del Prado and finishing up as the multi-lane Paseo de la Castellana, famous for its summer terrazas. Although there's plenty of nightlife in the city centre, especially around Plaza de Santa Ana and Huertas, you may also find yourself venturing further north to the barrios of Chueca and Malasaña for the hippest bars and clubs. Day-trips from the city include some of Spain's most splendid historic cities. Above all there's Toledo, immortalized by El Greco, which preceded Madrid as the Spanish capital, but other excellent excursions include Segovia, with its stunning Roman aqueduct; Felipe II's vast palace-mausoleum of El Escorial; Aranjuez, a riverside oasis in the parched Castilian plain, famed for its strawberries and lavish Baroque palace; and the beautiful walled city of Ávila, birthplace of Santa Teresa. The nearby mountains, the Sierra de Guadarrama, with their walking trails and lower temperatures, can also provide a welcome escape if the heat and bustle of the city get too much. Calling Madrid from abroad, dial your international access code, then 34, followed by the subscriber's number, which will nearly always start with 91.

WHEN TO GO

Traditionally, Madrid has a typical continental climate, cold and dry in winter and hot and dry in summer. There are usually two rainy periods, in October/November and any time from late March to early May. With soaring temperatures in July and August, the best times to visit are often spring and autumn, when the city is pleasantly warm. The short, sharp winter takes many visitors by surprise, but crisp sunny days with clear blue skies compensate for the drop in temperatures. Although Madrid is increasingly falling into line with other European capitals, much of it still shuts down in summer. For around six weeks from the end of July, half the bars, restaurants and offices close, and their inhabitants head for the coast or countryside. Luckily for visitors, and those Madrileños who choose to remain, sights and museums stay open and nightlife takes on a momentum of its own. In addition, the council has initiated a programme of summer entertainment, meaning it's not a bad time to be in town, as long as you're not trying to get anything done.