

Retiro and Paseo del Arte

Retiro is a district in eastern-central [Madrid](#). While it is dominated by the **Retiro Park**, it also houses 125,000 residents. This article also includes the **Paseo del Arte** where the city's most famous art museums are lined up. In 2021, much of this district was inscribed as a cultural site on the [UNESCO World Heritage List](#).

Understand

The district **Retiro** is named after the **Parque del Buen Retiro** ("park of the good retreat"), a more than 350 acres large public park that has been developed since the 16th century. The landscape gardens were essentially shaped in the 1630s during the reign of Philip IV and were considered to be a "world art wonder" of their time. Buen Retiro park and palace served as the Spanish kings' court, especially during Lent and hot periods. An astronomical observatory and a museum of natural history (today's Prado) were situated within the extensive grounds. The attached palace was ruined during the Napoleonic Wars and the remaining park was re-assigned to the public in 1868.



Glass palace in Retiro Park



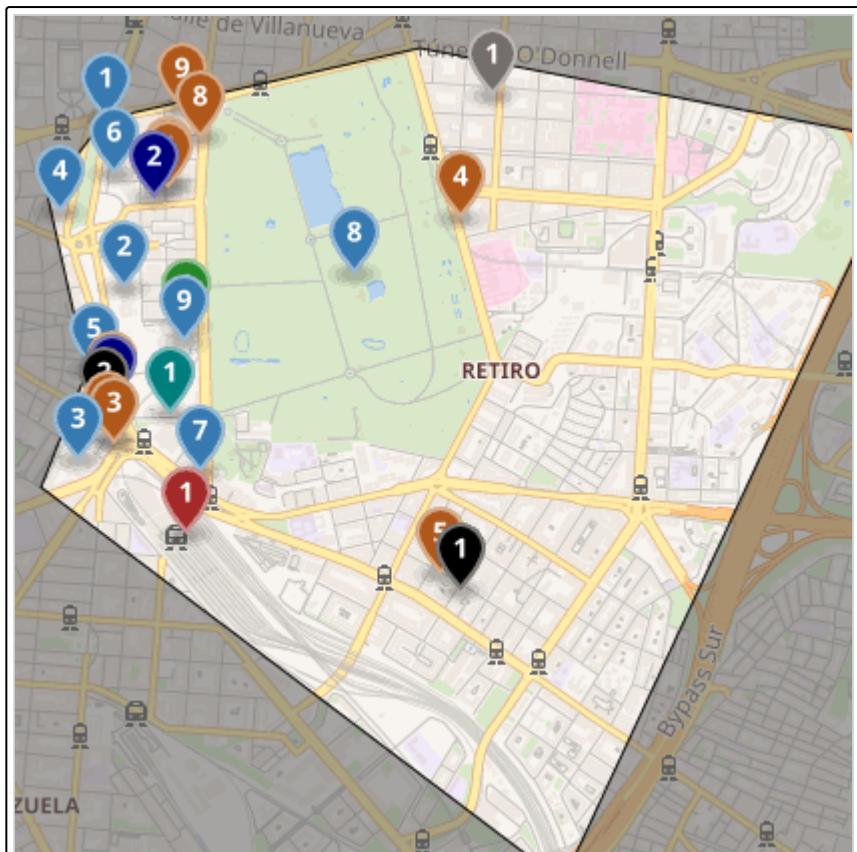
Paseo del Arte means "walk of arts" or "arts avenue", sometimes called the "museum triangle", and is a ~1.3-km-long strip along which Madrid's most notable art museums are lined up: the Prado, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Foundation, CaixaForum and the National Centre of Modern Art "Reina Sofía".

Get in

Madrid's main station, **1 Atocha**, is near the southwestern corner of Retiro Park and the southern end of Paseo del Arte. Metro stations that serve this district are *Retiro* at the northern entrance to the park and *Banca de España* near the Thyssen museum (both served by line 2), *Atocha* near the botanic garden, CaixaForum and Reina Sofía museum, *Menéndez Pelayo*, *Pacífico* and *Puente de Vallecas* (all served by line 1), *Ibiza* (line 9), *Sainz de Baranda* (6, 9), *Conde de Casal* (6) and *Estrella* (9).

See

Landmarks and architecture



Map of Madrid/Retiro-Paseo del Arte

- **1 Plaza de Cibeles** (*Banco de España* **2**). A massive roundabout at the intersection of Calle de Alcalá and Paseo del Prado, this plaza houses one of Madrid's emblems, the **Fountain of Cibeles**, which portrays the Roman goddess of fertility sitting upon a chariot pulled by two lions. On the southeast corner dominating the Plaza is one of the world's most beautiful city halls, the **Palacio de Cibeles** (formerly the *Palacio de las Comunicaciones*), an impressive structure with a jaw-droppingly spectacular façade. Inside, the building holds a cultural center with changing art exhibits and info on Madrid, and you can climb to the upper floors for some excellent views out the window. On the southwest corner of the square sits the imposing **Bank of Spain** (*Banco de España*) building, while the northeast corner is home to the **Palacio de Linares**, which holds the *Casa de América* (<http://www.casamerica.es/>), a cultural center with an art gallery of Latin American works.



Fuente de Cibeles

Museums

This is Madrid's museum district, named for the three major art museums clustered along Paseo del Prado east of the old city: the Museo del Prado, one of the finest art museums in the world, the Thyssen-Bornemisza, a baron's collection of classical art, and the Reina Sofia, Madrid's modern art museum. However, a couple of smaller museums also occupy the neighborhood which are well worth seeing as well.



The northern entrance to Prado

■ **2 Museo del Prado** (<http://www.museodelprado.es/en/visit-the-museum/>) (*Prado Museum*), Paseo de Prado (Estación Del Arte [1](#) or Banco de España [2](#); Bus lines 9, 10, 14, 19, 27, 34, 37 and 45), [+34 913 302 800](#) (information), [+34 902 107 077](#) (ticket sales). M-Sa 10:00-20:00, Su 10:00-19:00; closed/shortened hrs on some holidays; extended hrs for special exhibits; last admission 30 min before closing. One of the finest art collections in the world and the best collection of classical art in Madrid. It includes many different collections: the Spanish (El Greco, Velázquez, and Goya), the Flemish and Dutch (Rubens, van Dyck, and Brueghel), Italian (Botticelli, Tintoretto, Titian, Caravaggio, and Veronese) and German (Albrecht Dürer, Lucas Cranach, and Baldung Grien). Some highlights not to miss at the Prado include the Bosch masterpiece *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Velázquez's masterpiece *Las Meninas*, the *Black Paintings* and *The Third of May 1808* by Goya, *Adoration of the Shepherds* by El Greco, and *David with the Head of Goliath* by Caravaggio. Be sure to walk along *Paseo del Prado*, a pedestrian walkway full of fountains and trees near the museum.

Visitors can bypass the often extremely long queues by purchasing tickets beforehand by phone or online (http://www.entradasprado.com/pradov2/individual/principalR.aspx?lang=en-GB&_ga=1.78470739.679512386.1466587425), for an additional €.90 fee per ticket. Tickets purchased online can be printed or downloaded onto a smart phone; all pre-purchased tickets can be picked up (with a reference number) or presented at the main (Jerónimos) entrance in the northeast corner of the building. If you are planning to spend a full day at the museum, it is possible to leave (e.g. for lunch) and reenter by getting your ticket stamped at the 'Educación' counter just inside the main entrance.

An affordable café and cafeteria-style restaurant are on the ground floor, along with a gift shop. No food, drinks, backpacks or umbrellas are permitted (a bag check is just inside the main entrance). Photography not permitted. €15 (adults), €7.50 (seniors 65+), free (children/students under 25); free admission M-Sa 18:00-20:00, Su/holidays 17:00-19:00; additional obligatory fee for special exhibits. (updated May 2024)



Reina Sofía National Museum and Art Center



Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum of Art

■ **3 Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía** (<http://www.museoreinasofia.es/en>) (*Museo Reina Sofía / Reina Sofía National Museum and Art Center*), C/ Santa Isabel, 52 (Estación Del Arte [1](#)), [+34 91 774 1000](#), fax: [+34 917 741 056](#). M W-Sa 10:00-21:00, Su 10:00-19:00. Housed in a former public hospital with an adjacent modern wing, this museum contains Spain's largest collection of 20th century art. It includes many of Pablo Picasso's most revered works including his renowned *Guernica*. The Reina Sofía also houses masterpieces by other Spanish masters including Joan Miró, Salvador Dalí, Juan Gris, and others, as well as works by a number of international artists, including Vasily

Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Francis Bacon, and more.

Purchasing tickets in advance no longer gives you a discounted entry but is a way to beat the queues. During free admission periods, it is still required to pick up a ticket at the ticket office; these times are especially busy and it best to arrive a bit before the free period actually begins. Photography is permitted, except in the room with Picasso's *Guernica* and the other rooms adjacent to it. Backpacks are not permitted, but there are free lockers after both entrances (in the older and modern wings). €12 (adults), free admission M W-Sa 19:00-21:00, Su 13:30-19:00.   (updated May 2024)

- **4 Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza** (<http://www.museothyssen.org/en/thyssen/home>)
(*Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum*), Paseo de Prado, 8 (*Banco de España*   +34 913 69 01 51). Permanent collection and Francisco Bores: Tu-Su 10:00-19:00, M 12:00-16:00; Bulgari and Rome collections: Tu-F 10:00-19:00, Sa 10:00-21:00, Su 10:00-19:00. Contains a large art collection including masterpieces by Monet, Goya, Degas, Renoir, Van Gogh, Picasso, Mondrian, Bacon and Lichtenstein. €13 (adults), €9 (concessions), free (children under 12) and all at certain times (see website).   (updated May 2024)

- **5 CaixaForum Madrid** (<https://caixaforum.org/es/madrid>), Paseo de Prado, 36 (*Estación Del Arte*   +34 913 307 300, infocaixaforummad@fundacionlacaixa.org (<mailto:infocaixaforummad@fundacionlacaixa.org>)). Daily 10:00-18:00, open holidays. A private centre particularly well-known for the 'vertical garden' by Patrick Blanc installed on a wall in front of the museum, as well as the quite special architecture of the building itself. The vertical garden can be seen from the street outside, just a block south of the Thyssen-Bornemisza and across from the Prado. The museum only displays temporary exhibitions, usually of a very high quality, in fields ranging from archaeology to contemporary art and architecture. €6, free (La Caixa account holders), free on 15 May, 18 May, 9 Nov.   (updated May 2024)



Vertical garden, CaixaForum



- **6 Museo Naval de Madrid** (<https://armada.defensa.gob.es/ArmadaPortal/page/Portal/ArmaDaEspannola/cienciaorgano/prefLang-en/01cienciamuseo>) (*Naval Museum of Madrid*), Paseo del Prado, 5 (*Banco de España*   +34 915 238 516, ohculturanalaval@fn.mde.es (<mailto:ohculturanalaval@fn.mde.es>)). Sep- Jul: Tu-Su 10:00-19:00; Aug: Tu-Su 10:00-15:00. A beautiful museum with vast interesting collections about Spanish sailing. €3 (requested donation).   (updated Jan 2017)

- **7 Museo Nacional de Antropología** (<http://mnantropologia.mcu.es/index.html>) (*National Museum of Anthropology*), C/ Alfonso XII, 68 (Metro: *Atocha Renfe*; *Renfe Cercanías: Atocha*,  +34 91 530 64 18, +34 91 539 59 95). Tu-Sa 09:30-20:00, Su and holidays 10:00-15:00. Small but interesting museum with artefacts and models from the indigenous people of Asia (mainly the Philippines, former colony of Spain), Africa and America. The exhibits are described in Spanish, however on each floor there is a leaflet in English explaining all sections. €3 (adults), €1.50 (concessions), free (seniors/students/children under 18); free Sa after 14:00 and Su.   (updated Feb 2017)

Parks

- **8 Parque del Retiro** (<https://www.esmadrid.com/en/tourist-information/parque-del-retiro>) (*El Retiro Park*) (*Retiro*      or *Atocha*    ). The main park of Madrid, the perfect place to take a rest during a sunny day, or take part in the drum circles around the statue of Alphonso XII on summer evenings. There is a large boating lake where one can hire a rowing boat - great fun for the children! There is a monument to the victims of the Madrid 3/11 terrorist bombings, the *Forest of the Absent*, and the *Crystal Palace*, a large structure

entirely made of glass. Sunday afternoons in summer are a treat in the park, where young hippies play bongos and dance. Free (park).   (updated Sep 2024)

- **9 Real Jardín Botánico de Madrid** (<https://rjb.csic.es/>) (*Royal Botanical Garden of Madrid*), Pl. Murillo, 2, Retiro. Close to Museo Nacional del Prado. (*Estación Del Arte* ,  +34 914 200 438. Nov-Feb: daily 10:00-18:00; Mar/Oct: daily 10:00-19:00; Apr/Sep: daily 10:00-20:00; May-Aug: daily 10:00-21:00. Established in 1755, the garden has been in its current location since 1774. Its extensive collection is dispersed over seven sections, five greenhouses, and a herbarium. A map of the garden is available here (<http://www.rjb.csic.es/jardinbotanico/jardin/index.php?Cab=5&SubCab=28&len=en&Pag=25>). €4 (adults), €1 (65+; students 18-25), free (children under 18).   (updated Sep 2024))



El Retiro park 

Do

- **1 Renoir Retiro** (<https://www.cinesrenoir.com/cartelera/cine/485C4BCD671DC701/>), C/ Narvaez, 42 (*metro: Ibiza*),  +34 915 414 100.
- **Banda Sinfónica Municipal de Madrid**,  +34 915 267 147, +34 915 267 158 (M-F 08:00-15:00), bsinfonica@madrid.es (<mailto:bsinfonica@madrid.es>). An orchestra that performs in El Retiro Park in the summer. Tickets can be purchased at the Teatro Monumental (listed above) and at the tourist information centre in Plaza Mayor, as well as online (<https://madrid-destino.shop.secutix.com/list/events>). €5 (adults), €3 (seniors/youth/children). 

Learn

- **1 Cronopios Idiomas** (<https://cronopiosidiomas.com/>), C/ Espalter 12,  +34 915 222 014, hola@cronopiosidiomas.com (<mailto:hola@cronopiosidiomas.com>). M-F 08:30 - 17:30. Cooperative Spanish language school run by the teachers. The Spanish courses are based on a communicative approach to make learning Spanish relaxed, fun and effective. Other services offered include cultural workshops and guided tours, for which the school works with a historian and an art expert, as well as finding accommodation for students. Intensive course €85 per week.

Buy

- **1 Cuesta de Moyano** (*near Museo del Prado*). A quaint outdoor book market. 

Eat

There are many restaurants and tapas bars in the neighbouring barrio de las Letras, just a few hundred metres west of the Paseo del Arte, especially on and around Plaza Santa Ana (750 m west of the Thyssen Museum)

Budget

- **1 Cafetería Restaurante Alfonso XI**, C. de Alfonso XI, 13. (updated Feb 2023)
- **2 Museo del Jamón**, P.^o del Prado, 44. Tapas restaurant (updated Feb 2023)
- **3 100 Montaditos**, Pl. del Emperador Carlos V, 9. Tapas restaurant (updated Feb 2023)
- **4 Pollo Rico Asador**, Av. de Menéndez Pelayo, 55. (updated Feb 2023)
- **5 Golden Chicken**, C. de Granada, 22. (updated Feb 2023)

Mid-range

- **6 Restaurante Adrede**, C. de Alfonso XI, 13. (updated Feb 2023)
- **7 Sukaldea Atotxa**, Calle del Dr. Drumén, 3. (updated Feb 2023)

Splurge

- **8 Horcher**, C. de Alfonso XII, 6. (updated Feb 2023)
- **9 Arahy Restaurante**, C. de Alcalá, 58. (updated Feb 2023)

Drink

- **1 FoggBar Birras & Burgers** (<http://foggbar.es/>) (*El Rincón de Fogg*), C/ Juan de Urbieta, 12 (Metro: *Pacífico*), ☎ +34 912 836 026. Su-Th 07:00-22:00, F Sa 07:00-24:00. You can have 2 litres of sangría in a self service dispenser from just €14, or €13 for 2 litres of beer, and you get a free plate of patatas bravas. They also have a delicious selection of bocatas from €2.45. Big TV to watch the football matches while enjoying eating and drinking. If you say you've read this, they'll invite you to a glass of rosado wine. (updated Feb 2017)
- **2 Kapital**, Atocha, 125 (Metro: *Atocha*). Enormous club with 7 floors. However, despite its popularity this club is usually not worth visiting. The owner has a policy to try and limit the

number of foreigners in the club so if you are from anywhere except Spain, you will likely get bad treatment. €10-20.

Sleep

Mid-range

- **1 Hotel NH Nacional** (<http://www.nh-hotels.com/nh/en/hotels/spain/madrid/nh-nacional.htm>) (*Opposite Atocha station, in the heart of the Art Triangle, 1 minute from the new exhibition centre 'Caixa Forum' and the botanical gardens.*).

Splurge

- **2 Petit Palace Lealtad Plaza** (<http://www.petitpalace-lealtadmadrid.com/>), c/Antonio Maura, 5 28014. Stylish 4 star-hotel in the Retiro district in central Madrid.

Connect

Routes through Retiro-Paseo del Arte

Northern Suburbs ← Salamanca ← anticlockwise **M-30** clockwise → Arganzuela → Southern Suburbs

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