

## Title:

Travel to Madrid: Europe's Eldest Infant

## Word Count:

543

## Summary:

Madrid may have been full of life by 1200 A.D. but it was not until 1979 that the capital city of Spain held its first free and democratic elections.

## Keywords:

Madrid, travel to Madrid, discount airfare to Madrid, cheap tickets, Madrid travel information, travel deals

## Article Body:

Madrid may have been full of life by 1200 A.D. but it was not until 1979 that the capital city of Spain held its first free and democratic elections. The tumultuous tribulations of the 20th century have left a distinct flavor about the art, attitude and culture in Madrid. Visitors will find a thriving and exuberant local population proud and eager to share its resilient, if not neglected, history with the world.

The modern heart and soul of Spain is central to the entire Iberian Peninsula, making Madrid the ideal place to initiate your Spanish adventure. Madrid is also rich with Moorish heritage as it was a contentious battleground between the Islamic and Christian Empires for much of the modern era. A stroll through Barrio de la Morería (Moorish Quarter) invokes an essence of Medieval Madrid through ornate Islamic architecture and hidden plazas. The art and architecture of Madrid also speaks of the temporary but influential Habsburg and Bourbon Rules.

## Museum Hop 'Til You Drop

Madrid is the internationally celebrated home of Spain's most prominent art collections. The Museo del Prado houses the world's largest and most prized collection featuring over 8,600 master works by Velázquez, Goya, El Greco, Ribera, Raphael, Botticelli, Fra Angélico, and Rembrandt, to name a few. Since 1819, the collection has been moved twice - during the Spanish Civil War and WWII - and has sustained immaculate condition. The Prado is also a work of art in its own right, designed by famed 18th century architect Juan de Villanueva. For the grandeur and curious intricacies of contemporary Spanish art, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia is a crucial visit. Once you have managed to overcome the awe of Picasso's Guernica, make sure to explore the fascinating

world of Spanish photography, sculpture and film along with an incredible collection of Kandinsky, Miró and Dalí. Finally, take a journey through royal Madrid at the Palacio Real. The 2800-room palace is no longer inhabited by the royal family, but the walls are lined with elaborate frescos and original artwork by the likes of El Greco and Goya. Stop by the two beautiful gardens and get your fix of ancient apothecary remedies in the Farmacia Real.

#### Madrid in Present Tense

In Madrid it is easy to leave history behind and become immersed in the boisterous blooming lifestyle that fills the streets. The pulse of Madrid's beating heart can be found in the Plaza Mayor, the town square built in 1619 by Juan Gómez de Mora. Although it's unlikely you'll be able to throw stones at heretics here anymore, console yourself with an alfresco drink and pastry at one of the many cafes. For the resilient shopper, do not miss the Sunday Rastro flea market along the Calle de la Ribera de Curtidos, where bargain hunters and pack-rats alike will be in seventh heaven.

Travel to Madrid for the perfect beginning to your Spanish vacation. Many captivating destinations lie just beyond the city, including the world heritage town of Alcala de Henares, the royal Aranjuez and the picturesque mountain town of Manzanares El Real.

For more information on international travel and <a href="http://www.cfares.com/madrid/">discount airfare to Madrid</a>, visit <a href="http://www.cfares.com">www.cfares.com</a>.