

→ Parks and gardens

Its tree-lined streets, vast parks and growing commitment to the environment make this city one of Europe's greenest capitals. In 2021, El Retiro Park and Paseo del Prado were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the category of Cultural Landscapes, a distinction that recognises the way the area brings together nature, culture and science in a single urban setting. Both places are part of the Landscape of Light, so named because it was precisely during the era of the Enlightenment, under Charles III, that the entire area underwent a spectacular transformation. The city also has a large number of historic gardens and parks such as Campo del Moro, El Capricho and Casa de Campo, as well as former recreational estates. In Madrid you can always find a spot to disconnect from the hustle and bustle of the big city.

HISTORIC GARDENS

→ Parque de El Retiro

Plaza de la Independencia, 7
METRO: Retiro, Príncipe de Vergara, Ibiza, Estación del Arte
INFO: April–September: Monday–Sunday 6:00–0:00
October–March: Monday–Sunday 6:00–22:00

Ask people from Madrid what their favourite spot in the city is and it's likely many of them will choose El Retiro. The park is the historic garden of the Buen Retiro Palace that once stood on the site which was built around 1630 as a pleasure ground for King Philip IV and the members of the court. The lake - watched over by the Monument to Alfonso XII -, the stunning Glass and Velázquez palaces, which are used by the Reina Sofía Museum for temporary exhibitions, and the Paseo de Coches, where the Book Fair is held every spring, are just some of the sites of interest that are worth seeking out when you visit Madrid's green lung. In 2021, together with the Paseo del Prado, it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the category of Cultural Landscapes.



→ Real Jardín Botánico

Plaza de Murillo, 2
METRO: Banco de España, Estación del Arte
INFO: November–February: Monday–Sunday 10:00–17:30
March & October: Monday–Sunday 10:00–18:30
April & September: Monday–Sunday 10:00–19:30
May–August: Monday–Sunday 10:00–20:30

In the mid-18th century, King Charles III dreamt of transforming the Paseo del Prado promenade into the epicentre of Spanish science. On top of San Blas Hill he commissioned the construction of the Royal Observatory of Madrid, and just metres away, the Cabinet of Natural History –the building which now houses the Prado Museum– and this wonderful Royal Botanical Garden. The main buildings that form the complex were designed by neoclassical architect Juan de Villanueva. In addition to harbouring roughly 5,000 species of live plants, the gardens are of great artistic value, a cornerstone of the complex envisioned by the king.



→ Jardines de Sabatini

Bailén, 2
METRO: Plaza de España, Ópera



On the northern side of the Royal Palace are the Sabatini Gardens, named after an architect who designed numerous works in Madrid, such as the Puerta de Alcalá gate. The gardens were built after the royal stables were demolished in the mid-20th century.

→ Campo del Moro

Paseo de la Virgen del Puerto, s/n
METRO: Príncipe Pío, Ópera
INFO: October–March: Monday–Sunday 10:00–18:00
April–September: Monday–Sunday 10:00–20:00

This Romantic-style garden, commissioned by Queen Maria Christina, is located on the western side of the Royal Palace. Featuring a number of architectural gems, it is one of the most peaceful spots in the entire city.



OTHER PARKS

→ Parque del Oeste

Paseo de Camoens y Valero, 4
METRO: Plaza de España, Moncloa, Argüelles, Príncipe Pío

In the late 19th century the Mayor of Madrid, Alberto Aguilera, had the idea of creating this vast park on the site of what was once an urban landfill. Today it is home to the Temple of Debod, a rose garden and various bunkers from the Civil War.



→ Parque de Berlín

Avenida de Ramón y Cajal, 2
METRO: Concha Espina

This park bears the name of the German capital, a city with which Madrid shares a symbol: the bear. In the centre of one of its fountains stand three segments that formed part of the Berlin Wall.

→ Parque Enrique Tierno Galván

Meneses, 4
METRO: Méndez Álvaro

A stone's throw away from the city's southern bus station, Estación Sur de Autobuses, lies this park named after the first Mayr following Spain's transition to democracy. The Planetarium is located atop one of its hills.

→ Parque Lineal del Manzanares

Camino de Perales, 47
METRO: Hospital 12 de Octubre
INFO: Autumn & Winter: Monday–Sunday 7:00–22:00
Spring & Summer: 7:00–0:00



This park designed by architect Ricardo Bofill is located on the banks of the section of the Manzanares River that flows through the district of Us- era. At its highest point is a striking sculpture by Manolo Valdés which is commonly known as *The Lady of the Manzanares*.

→ Cerro del Tío Pío

Benjamín Palencia, 2
METRO: Buenos Aires, Portazgo

One of the best views in all Madrid is the one offered by this park, located in the district of Puente de Val- lecas, whose seven hills have been nicknamed “the seven boobs” by Madrid's residents.



→ Parque Juan Carlos I

Glorieta S.A.R. Don Juan de Borbón y Battenberg, 5
METRO: Feria de Madrid
INFO: June–September: Monday–Sunday 7:00–1:00
October–May: Sunday–Thursday 7:00–23:00
Friday–Saturday 7:00–0:00



Located right by the Feria de Madrid trade fair grounds, Juan Carlos I Park is one of the largest in the city. It boasts an artificial river and numerous abstract sculptures.

→ Parque Forestal de Valdebebas-Felipe VI

Avenida de las Fuerzas Armadas, 11
INFO: 2 March–31 May: Monday–Sunday 8:00–20:30
1 June–14 October: Monday–Sunday 8:00–22:00
15 October–1 March: Monday–Sunday 9:00–18:30

The most recent major park to open in the capital is inspired by the different ecosystems found in the Iberian Peninsula.

FORESTS AND COUNTRY HOMES

→ Casa de Campo

Paseo Puerta del Ángel, 1
METRO: Lago, Casa de Campo

This pine and holm oak forest, located in the west- ern part of the city, has an area of 1,700 hectares and was originally the country villa of the Vargas family, one of the richest in Madrid in the early 16th century. It later became the property of the Royal Family and then, after the arrival of the Second Re- public, of the City Council. Its lake was designed by Dutch engineer Pietre Jansen for the enjoyment of the monarchs. The park is home to a great many

rabbits, and you can also see starlings, great tits, orioles and nightingales, among many other birds. Inside the fenced area you'll find the trade fair grounds, the Parque de Atracciones amusement park and the Zoo Aquarium.



→ Monte de El Pardo

Multiple entrances

Just ten kilometres from Puerta del Sol is one of the best-preserved Mediterranean forests in all of Eu- rope, perhaps because a large portion of it is closed to the general public. For centuries it was the fa- vourite hunting ground of Spain's monarchs, who built a palace with the same name (El Pardo) on the site. You can also visit the Prince's House and the Quinta del Duque de Arco baroque garden. Behind the fence that protects the parkland, you can spot wild boars and deer. A stroll along the banks of the Manzanares River is also highly recommendable.



→ Quinta de la Fuente del Berro

Enrique D'Almonte, 1
METRO: O'Donnell, Manuel Becerra
INFO: April–September: Monday–Sunday 6:30–0:00
October–March: Monday–Sunday 6:30–22:00

This country home in the Barrio de Salamanca neighbourhood was one of the first to be built in the eastern part of Madrid, near the road to Alcalá. Pri- vately owned by the Royal Family, in the 19th cen- tury it became a pleasure park for the bourgeoisie. It was renowned for the quality of the water that fed its fountain.



→ Quinta de Torre Arias

Alcalá, 551
METRO: Torre Arias
INFO: October–March: Monday–Sunday 9:00–18:00
April–September: Monday–Sunday 8:00–21:30

This country home has a history that stretches back to the 16th century, and although it is now a public park it still plays host to agricultural activities.

→ Quinta de los Molinos

Alcalá, 527
METRO: Suanzes
INFO: Monday–Sunday 6:30–22:00

In 1920 César Cort Botí, a councillor and a professor at the School of Architecture of Madrid, transformed the property into an estate for plants that are typi- cally found in the Mediterranean. The park is filled with almond trees whose buds burst into beautiful blooms every February.



→ El Capricho de la Alameda de Osuna

Paseo Alameda de Osuna, 25
METRO: El Capricho
INFO: October–March: Saturday–Sunday & Holidays 9:00–18:30
April–September: Saturday–Sunday & Holidays 8:00–21:00
Closed 25 December & 1 January

Built by the Duke and Duchess of Osuna, El Capricho was frequented by 18th century artists and thinkers like painter Francisco de Goya and writer Leandro Fernández de Moratín. The garden is home to mul- tiple fantastical constructions –such as the witch's house, the wasp's nest and the hermitage–, as well as a labyrinth and a lake.



→ Olivar de Castillejo

Menéndez Pidal, 3
METRO: Cuzco, Pio XII, Colombia
INFO: Opening hours subject to activities

In 1917 José Castillejo, a teacher at the progres- sive Free Educational Institution (ILE), bought this property, which is now the seat of the foundation that bears his name. In the summer months it holds numerous cultural activities.

→ Finca Vista Alegre

General Ricardo, 179
METRO: Oporto, Vista Alegre
INFO: October–March: 9:00–18:00;
April & September: 9:00–20:00;
May–August: 9:00–21:00

Finca Vista Alegre, in the district of Carabanchel, was built in 1802 but rose to the height of its glory in the mid-19th century when it was the summer home of Maria Christina of the Two Sicilies, Ferdinand VII's fourth wife.

GREEN ROUTES

→ Hapsburg Madrid to Lavapiés

Duration: 1 h
Difficulty: low

Our first route begins in front of the Royal Palace in Plaza de Oriente, one of the city's leafiest squares, surrounded by the Cabo Noval Gardens and the Lepanto Gardens. From there, head down Calle de Bailén to Calle Mayor. Turn right and continue to Emir Mohamed Park, where you can see the remains of the Arab city wall. Climb the steps of Cuesta de los Ciegos to get to Las Vistillas Gardens, which hosts outdoor dances during the eagerly-awaited local festivities. Take Calle de San Buenaventura to reach the Basilica of San Francisco el Grande, whose southern side boasts a garden that is home to 21 types of roses. Heading down Carrera de San Francisco, continue on to Plaza de los Carros, and from there to Plaza de la Paja and the delightful Príncipe de Anglona Garden, which belonged to the palace found next to it. Before leaving the area known as Madrid de los Austrias (Hapsburg Madrid), head to Calle del Almendro, where remains of the Christian city wall can still be seen. Continue on to Plaza de Puerta Cerrada and Plaza de Tirso de Molina, with its Flower Market. Walk through the neighbourhood of Lavapiés to reach El Casino de la Reina, which was gifted by the City Council to Maria Isabel of Braganza, the second wife of Ferdinand VII, and is now a public park. Finally, head to Calle Doctor Fourquet, which is very close to the Reina Sofía Museum, to visit the urban garden Esto es una Plaza (“This is a Square”).

→ Malasaña to Chamberí

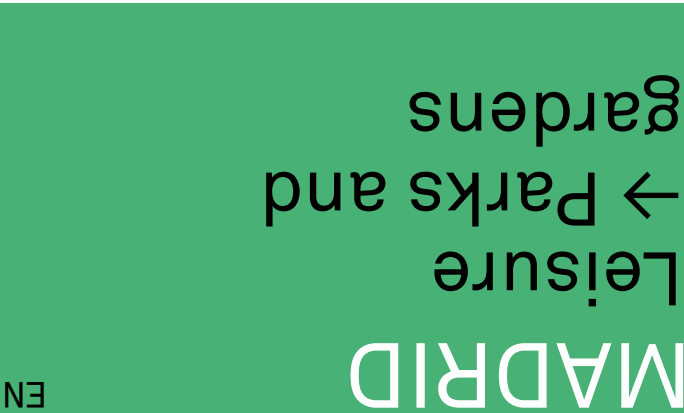
Duration: 1 h
Difficulty: low

Departing from Plaza del Dos de May, the epicentre of the neighbourhood of Malasaña, head to the Ar- quitecto Ribera Garden. Just metres away, in Calle de San Mateo, is the Museum of Romanticism, which has a beautiful interior garden. Take Calle Fernando VII to Plaza de las Salesas, which is pre- sided over by a spectacular church that shares the square's name, and head around the former mon- astery to reach Plaza de la Villa de París, where the Supreme Court and the National High Court are lo- cated. Continue along Calle Orellana until you reach Plaza de Santa Bárbara, known for its outdoor bars and cafés, and then leave the city's central core via the Glorieta de Alonso Martínez roundabout, head- ing over to the district of Chamberí. Your first stop is Plaza de Olavide, a landscaped pedestrian zone. In Avenida General Martínez Campos you will find the gardens of the Sorolla Museum, the house where the renowned Impressionist artist lived. Finally, head up to the gardens of Canal de Isabel II and its circular exhibition hall.

→ Madrid Río

Duration: 1 h
Difficulty: low

From Príncipe Pío station to Matadero Madrid tem- porary, the banks of the Manzanares River offer a stroll with wonderful views and numerous green areas. From north to south, you will pass Huerta de la Partida Garden, which is part of Casa de Campo Park, the area around the Hermitage of Virgen del Puerto, the gardens at Puente de Segovia bridge, the gardens at Puente de Toledo bridge, Arganzue- la Park and the Arganzuela Greenhouse. Along the route there are a dozen children's play areas with swings, ziplines and seesaws. Madrid Río Park also boasts an artificial beach and multiple fountains, and is the ideal place to go skating or for a bike ride. If you've got time to spare you can take a bit of a detour to San Isidro Cemetery, an impressive monu- mental complex which also offers an expansive view of the city centre.



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*specifications on the web

