



Madrid is often passed up by tourists who choose Barcelona as their Spanish stop-off. This is mistake as Spain's capital has so much to offer. For a taste of the real Spain, head straight for Madrid's winding streets, its elegant plazas and parks and the city's famous nightlife.

Getting there:

- **From Dublin** – direct flights daily with Ryanair and direct flight 6 days a week with Aer Lingus.

From the airport:

- **Barajas** - From the airport take the Metro into town. It costs about €1 and takes about 15 minutes. A taxi to the city centre will cost about €25.

Where to stay:

- **Hostel Lopez** is a good central option. The elderly couple who own this place are a bit crazy but very friendly. Safe and central. www.hostellopez.com
- **Los Amigos Backpackers' Hostel** is popular with students. Big dorms are available for groups. www.losamigoshostel.com
- **Hostel Adriano** – another good option, this bright and cheery place is a great spot to stay in. www.hosteladriano.com

Things to do:

- **Bullfighting** –not for the faint-hearted, this national sport can be seen in action every Sunday from May – October. Tickets are cheap (from €5) and can be bought at www.las-ventas.com
- **Parks** – the Parque de Buen Retiro. This city park is the perfect place to have a

stroll in if your head needs clearing after a heavy night on the town. There a small lake where you can hire a boat and row around. Great fun but exhausting!

- **Galleries** - The Reina Sofia houses an amazing collection of modern Spanish art, including Picasso's *Guernica*. There are also works by Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró.
- **Tapas** – the perfect accompaniment to your caña (small glass of beer). Try strolling along Calle de la Cava Baja and the nearby streets for some really tasty treats.

Nightlife:

Partying on the streets is what Madrid is all about. Once the weather is warm enough, the city becomes full of lively terraces which are packed until dawn.

- **Palacio Gaviria** – this place has international student nights which are pretty wild! 9 Calle de Arenal.
- **Kapital** – this place is seven stories of fun! There are cocktails bars, dance music, salsa and all sorts. 125, Calle de Atocha.
- **Casa Patas** – This place has live Flamenco. 10, Calle de Cañizares.

Tootips:

- For a real post clubbing pick-me-up, head to Chocolatería de San Ginés and order the churros and chocolate. Heaven! 5, Pasadizo San Ginés.
- Madrid's markets are a great place to potter around and bargain. El Rastro is the most famous and the largest. Sunday 8am – 2pm. Calle Ribera Curtidores.
- The Reina Sofia is free on Sundays.

