



# SPAIN



Sept 22 – Oct 4, 2026

# TO MADRID



Tuesday, September 22, 2026  
DAY 0 – FLIGHT TO MADRID

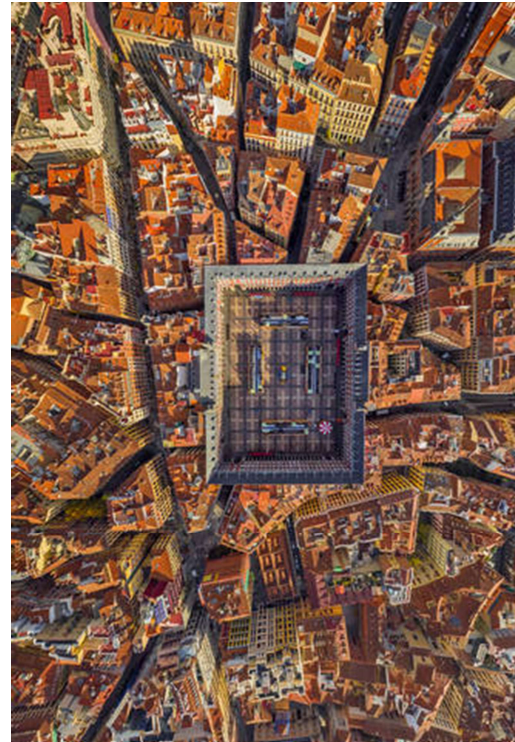
## FLIGHT DETAILS



Iberia Airline Confirmation: PNZXXN  
American Airlines Flight 8848  
Washington DC (IAD) - Madrid (MAD)  
5:00 PM - 6:50 AM next day

## MADRID – AN OVERVIEW

Madrid's identity is less about a single defining moment than a gradual accumulation of power, culture, and movement. What began as a modest 9th-century Moorish outpost—Mayrit, a fortified settlement overlooking the Manzanares—remained relatively minor until 1561, when Philip II unexpectedly established the Spanish court here. Without a cathedral, river port, or ancient pedigree, Madrid grew instead through administration and proximity to power, expanding outward from the Alcázar (now the Royal Palace) into a sequence of plazas, boulevards, and civic spaces. The city's most significant transformations came in layers: the Habsburg period shaped the dense historic core; the Bourbon era introduced a more formal, Enlightenment vision with grand avenues and institutions; and the 19th and early 20th centuries extended the city north and east with broader streets and neighborhoods. Unlike other European capitals, Madrid remains highly walkable and legible—its transitions are felt physically, from compressed streets to open plazas to the expansive edge near the palace and parks. What defines Madrid today is its rhythm. The city unfolds slowly through the day, gathering energy into the evening. Move through it on foot, letting its spaces reveal themselves in sequence rather than as destinations.



# LOGISTICS IN SPAIN



## GETTING AROUND



This itinerary is built around walking. In Madrid, Seville, and Granada, most major sites sit within compact, navigable centers, making it easy to move without planning routes in advance. Taxis are useful for arrivals, departures, and occasional longer transfers—particularly from train stations—but are otherwise rarely needed. Trains between cities are simple and reliable, forming the backbone of the trip. Within cities, pedestrian streets are common, and the final approach to hotels or apartments may require a short walk. Overall, movement is straightforward, with little need to rely on public transit.

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## DAILY RHYTHM



Days tend to build gradually. Mornings are the best time for major sites, when temperatures are cooler and crowds are lighter. Midday remains usable, especially outside peak summer, but benefits from a slower pace or a break. Late afternoon often serves as a reset—returning to the hotel, pausing, or shifting to a lighter activity. Evenings are when cities feel most active, with a more social atmosphere and comfortable temperatures. This trip follows that rhythm naturally, balancing structured mornings with more open, flexible time later in the day.

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## CROWDS



Late September and early October fall into a shoulder season, with steady but manageable tourism. Major sites—the Prado, the Alhambra, and the Cathedral in Seville—will be busy, particularly in the late morning and early afternoon. Timed entries help control flow, but do not eliminate crowds. Outside of these sites, the experience is more open, especially in the evenings and in secondary areas. Early starts and a willingness to shift pace are usually enough to avoid peak congestion. Overall, the level of tourism is noticeable but rarely overwhelming.

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## PRACTICAL NOTES



Spain is easy to navigate with a few adjustments. Tipping is minimal—rounding up or leaving small change is sufficient. Tap water is generally safe, though bottled water is common. Opening hours can vary, particularly for churches and smaller sites, with midday closures still occurring in some cases. Reservations are recommended for major attractions but less critical for restaurants, where flexibility works well. English is widely understood in cities, and interactions are straightforward. The trip requires little coordination beyond what is already planned, allowing most decisions to be made day by day.

## WEATHER – WHAT TO EXPECT

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Late September and early October offer some of the most balanced conditions for this itinerary. Days are generally warm and dry, with clear skies and strong sunlight, while mornings and evenings are noticeably cooler. The result is a full day of usable time without the extreme heat that defines summer in southern Spain.

In Madrid, expect daytime temperatures in the mid to high 70s, with cooler mornings and evenings that may call for a light layer. The city is easy to walk throughout the day, and outdoor spaces are especially pleasant in the late afternoon and evening.

In Andalucía (Seville and Córdoba), temperatures are slightly higher, often reaching the low to mid 80s. Midday sun remains strong, but conditions are far more manageable than in summer. Early starts and shaded routes still help, with evenings offering the most relaxed and social atmosphere.

In Granada, elevation brings slightly cooler temperatures, especially in the morning and after sunset. The Alhambra, set above the city, can feel breezier than the center, making a light layer useful early in the day.

Rain is unlikely but not impossible; brief showers can occur, though most days are clear. Sun exposure is the primary factor to manage—sunglasses and awareness go a long way.



## WHAT TO PACK

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Pack for warm days, cooler mornings and evenings, and a lot of walking. Lightweight shirts and breathable fabrics will carry you through most of the day, especially in Andalucía where the sun remains strong. Comfortable walking shoes are essential—most of the trip is on foot, often on stone streets.

Bring one light layer (a sweater or light jacket) for early mornings, higher elevations like the Alhambra, and evenings, particularly in Madrid and Granada. Sunglasses are important, and a hat can help during longer midday exposure.

You do not need heavy clothing or formal attire. Rain is unlikely, so a compact umbrella or light rain layer is optional rather than essential. Keep it simple—this is a trip where versatility and comfort matter more than variety.

## FOOD: WHEN & HOW TO EAT

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Meals in Spain follow a later, more relaxed rhythm than in the U.S., and adjusting to it improves the experience. Breakfast is light—coffee and a pastry or toast—more of a start to the day than a destination. Lunch, typically between 2:00 and 3:30 PM, is the main meal, often unhurried and structured. Dinner begins later, usually after 8:30 PM, and can be lighter depending on the day.

Tapas culture varies by region. In Granada, small plates are often served with drinks; elsewhere, they are ordered individually. Eating can be either quick and informal at a bar or slower and seated, depending on the setting. Meals are not rushed—service may feel slower, but the pacing is intentional. The day tends to build toward the evening, when the atmosphere becomes more social and relaxed.



## FOOD: WHAT TO EAT

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Spanish food is built around a core set of dishes that appear in different forms across regions. *Jamón ibérico* is the most consistent starting point—served simply and best enjoyed early in the trip. *Tortilla española* (potato and egg) is another staple, found everywhere from casual bars to more formal settings, along with *pan con tomate* (bread with tomato and olive oil). Paella is common on menus but not central in Madrid or Andalucía, where simpler regional dishes take priority.

Seafood is common, especially in Andalucía. Look for grilled fish such as *lubina* (sea bass) or *dorada* (sea bream), and fried fish like *pescado frito* in Seville. Bacalao (salt cod) appears in a variety of preparations and is worth trying at least once. In Madrid, a classic worth seeking out is the *bocadillo de calamares*—a simple but iconic sandwich of fried calamari on crusty bread.

Other reliable dishes include *croquetas* (typically ham or chicken), *albóndigas* (meatballs), grilled pork or lamb, and simple vegetable plates. In Madrid, *cocido madrileño* is the traditional hearty option—a slow-cooked stew of chickpeas, meats (such as pork, beef, and chorizo), and vegetables, often served in courses with broth first, followed by the solids—though lighter meals often make more sense. In Granada, tapas shape the experience—small, varied plates arriving with drinks rather than being ordered in sequence.

Desserts are simple: flan, *tarta de queso*, churros with chocolate, or small pastries, typically understated and optional.

# MADRID



Wednesday, September 23, 2026  
DAY 1 – ARRIVAL TO MADRID

## ARRIVAL & SETTLE IN



Taxi to the AirBnB, arriving around 8:00 AM. Take time to unpack, get oriented, and step out briefly for a few essentials. Settle in with a shower and a pause, then rest for a while before heading back out. A short sleep here will make the rest of the day feel much more open.

## LUNCH — STEP INTO MADRID



Head out for a late lunch nearby, around 2:00 PM. There are good options within a short walk. Have a relaxed sit-down meal to ease into the day, or a lighter start with a couple of tapas and a drink. Take your time here, before you're busting to explore the city.

## LATE AFTERNOON — CENTRO WALK



Begin moving west through the historic core. Drift toward Puerta del Sol and then the Plaza Mayor. Continue to the Royal Palace of Madrid, where the scale shifts again toward the edge of the city. Step into the Almudena Cathedral or continue along the western edge for views and light, especially as the afternoon softens. Return to the apartment for a short break.

## EVENING — OPEN



Leave the evening unstructured and follow energy and interest. This is a good time to stay close to the apartment or head out for a short walk and a few small bites. A local tapas crawl works well, though heading farther into La Latina is an option if you're feeling up for it. Let the options pages guide the night.

### Notes

Experience Plaza Mayor in passing rather than as a destination. The Royal Palace exterior is often enough if energy is low. Staying close this first evening keeps the rhythm easy



# APARTMENT IN MADRID



## THE APARTMENT



Set within a traditional building in Justicia, the apartment opens onto a lively pedestrian street through two small balconies, bringing in light and a constant sense of the city just beyond. Inside, the space is clean and modern—bright, compact, and carefully arranged—with a comfortable bed, a simple living area, and a recently renovated bath. Despite the activity below, soundproofed windows keep the interior quiet, making it easy to rest and reset between outings.

## THE NEIGHBORHOOD — JUSTICIA / CHUECA



One of Madrid's most dynamic areas, where the city's historic fabric meets a more contemporary edge. Streets are lined with cafés, small shops, and a mix of classic and modern storefronts, all within a few minutes' walk. From here, you're positioned between neighborhoods—Malasaña to the north, Gran Vía to the south, and the historic core to the west—making it easy to move in any direction without much planning. At night, the area shifts from local cafés to a more vibrant street life, with restaurants and bars extending into the evening just beyond your door.

## GETTING THERE



A taxi from the airport is the simplest arrival, typically 20–30 minutes depending on traffic. The driver will bring you close to the building, though the final approach may be on foot along the pedestrian street. With Gran Vía, Chueca, and Tribunal metro stations all nearby, the rest of the city is easily accessible—but most days, walking will be enough.

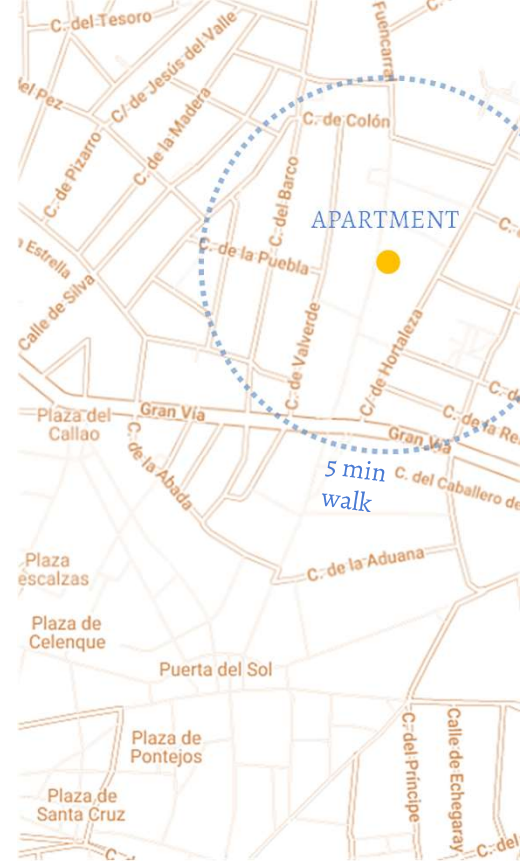
## FIRST ORIENTATION



Step outside and take a short loop through the surrounding streets. Within a few minutes, you'll feel the rhythm of the neighborhood—balconies overhead, cafés opening onto the street, the gradual shift toward larger avenues & plazas.

### Notes

Elevator access; central yet quiet with soundproof windows.  
AC and two Juliet balconies overlooking a pedestrian street.  
Nespresso machine; early check-in; excellent walkability.



# MADRID



Thursday, September 24, 2026

DAY 2 – PRADO & RETIRO

## WAKE AT WALK TO THE PRADO



Grab breakfast and walk ~20 minutes to arrive at the Prado just before opening (10:00 AM). Pre-book tickets for 10:00 AM and move through the collection selectively—90 minutes is enough for a focused first pass.



## MORNING - THE PRADO



The Museo del Prado is one of Europe's great painting collections, centered on the Spanish masters and their dialogue with the rest of Europe. Move through it selectively—pausing for Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, Goya's haunting canvases, and Bosch's intricate *Garden of Earthly Delights*. The galleries unfold in a clear sequence, shifting from observation to emotion to imagination. Rather than trying to see everything, let a handful of works anchor the visit and allow the scale and atmosphere of the museum to carry the experience.



## LATE MORNING – RETIRO PARK



Step out of the museum and walk east into Retiro. The shift is immediate—from enclosed galleries to open space and light. Move toward the *Estanque Grande* and the *Crystal Palace*, letting the scale open gradually as you walk. Stay in the area for a relaxed lunch—either just outside the park or drifting back toward *Barrio de las Letras*. A simple sit-down meal or a lighter tapas approach both work well here.



## AFTERNOON & EVENING — OPEN



The remainder of the day is unstructured. This creates space to follow energy and interest—whether continuing with another museum, returning to a neighborhood, or easing into the evening.

# THE PRADO: COLLECTION & CONTEXT

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The Museo del Prado is one of Europe's great painting collections, shaped not as an encyclopedic survey but as a focused reflection of royal taste and patronage. Its strength lies in the Spanish masters—Velázquez, Goya, and El Greco—set in direct dialogue with major European painters such as Titian, Rubens, and Bosch. Many of these works entered the collection through the Spanish monarchy, creating a concentrated record of influence, exchange, and adaptation across centuries.

What distinguishes the Prado is not just the quality of individual works, but the coherence of the collection. Spanish painting here carries a distinct tone—darker, more introspective, often grounded in court life, religion, and human complexity. Velázquez brings clarity and restraint, Goya pushes toward psychological intensity, and El Greco introduces a more expressive, almost otherworldly vision. Around them, the broader European tradition provides contrast in color, scale, and subject.

The result is a museum that feels less like a survey and more like a sustained conversation—one that reveals how Spanish art developed in response to, and in tension with, the wider European world.



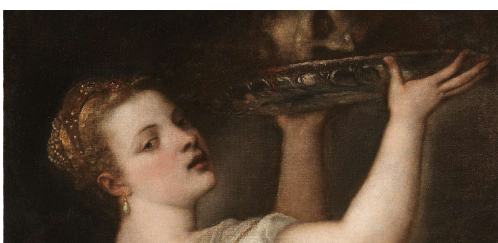
## THE PRADO – HOW TO LOOK

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The experience of the Prado is shaped as much by how you engage with it as by what you see. The density of important works is high, and the scale of many paintings—especially in the Spanish galleries—can be physically and visually demanding. Rather than moving quickly, it helps to slow the pace and allow a small number of works to hold your attention.

Much of the collection rewards close looking. Velázquez's paintings, for example, often reveal themselves gradually—composition, light, and spatial relationships becoming clearer the longer you stand with them. Goya's work shifts in tone from courtly portraiture to something far more unsettled, with darker themes and emotional weight. Even in crowded galleries, there are moments where stepping slightly aside or pausing at the edge of a room can create a quieter, more focused view.

The Prado is less about accumulation and more about absorption. It is a place where attention narrows rather than expands, and where the experience deepens not by seeing more, but by seeing more carefully.



# THE PRADO: KEY COLLECTIONS

## ZONE 1

### SPANISH CORE (VELÁZQUEZ / EL GRECO)



The emotional and spatial center of the museum. Monumental, confident, and unmistakably Spanish—this zone feels theatrical and immediate, with masterworks that define the Prado experience.

- *Las Meninas* (Velázquez), 1656 → Room 12
- *The Surrender of Breda* (Velázquez), 1634 → Room 9A
- *Portrait of a Nobleman* (El Greco), c. 1580 → Room 8

## ZONE 2

### ITALIAN & FLEMISH (TITIAN / RUBENS)



A more luminous, courtly atmosphere. Rich color, movement, and power dominate—imperial portraiture and mythological elegance create a sense of grandeur that complements but softens the Spanish core.

- *Charles V at Mühlberg* (Titian), 1548 → Room 27
- *Three Graces* (Rubens), 1630-35 → Room 29

## ZONE 3

### EARLY & NORTHERN MASTERS



Quieter, more introspective, and spiritually charged. This zone feels older and more symbolic—dense with narrative and detail, inviting slower looking and a more contemplative pace.

- *Garden of Earthly Delights* (Bosch), c. 1490-1510 → 56A
- *The Annunciation* (Fra Angelico), c. 1425-26 → 56B
- *Descent from the Cross* (Van der Weyden), c. 1435 → 58

## ZONE 4

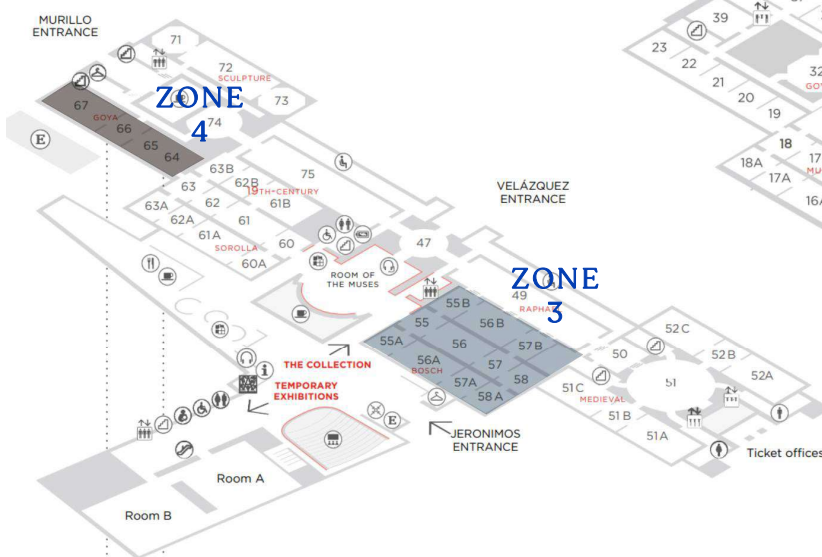
### GOYA (LATE / BLACK PAINTINGS)



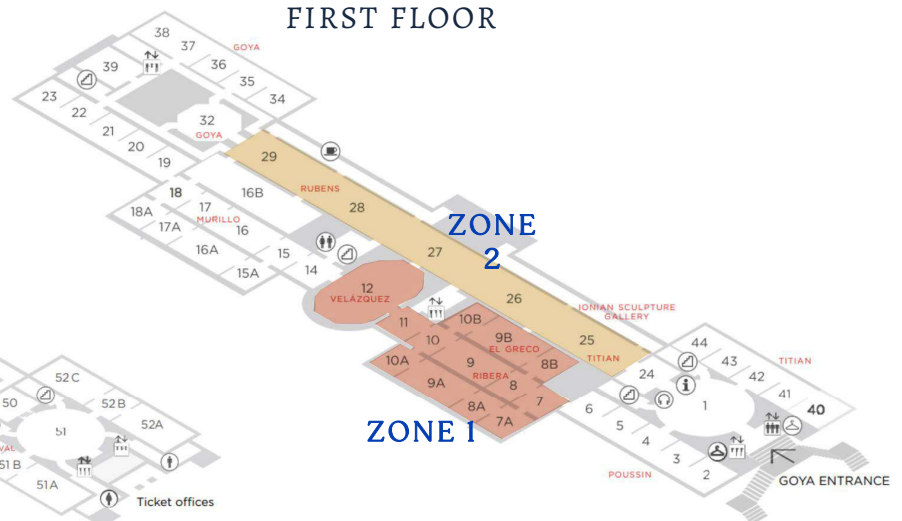
Dark, compressed, and emotionally intense. This zone shifts dramatically in tone—haunting, psychological, and modern in feeling, it confronts violence, fear, and the limits of reason.

- *Third of May 1808* (Goya), 1814 → 64
- *Saturn Devouring His Son* (Goya), c. 1820-23 → 67

## GROUND FLOOR



## FIRST FLOOR



# MADRID



Friday, September 25, 2026

## DAY 3 – ROYAL MADRID & OLD CITY

### WAKE + WALK / TRANSIT TO THE PALACIO REAL

Grab breakfast and head west across the city toward the Royal Palace. The walk is a straightforward ~30 minutes and works well if you're up early; otherwise take a short 10–12-minute taxi to arrive just before opening (typically 10:00 AM). Pre-book tickets for a timed entry and plan ~75–90 minutes for a focused visit through the main rooms.



### MORNING - THE ROYAL PALACE

The Palacio Real is less about a single masterpiece and more about immersion in scale, ceremony, and continuity. Built on the site of the old Alcázar, it reflects Spain's Bourbon era at its most theatrical—grand staircases, richly layered rooms, and ceilings that carry the full weight of dynastic ambition. Move through it with restraint, focusing on a handful of standout spaces: the main staircase, the Throne Room, and the Royal Chapel. The experience is about how one room leads to the next—so let the sequence unfold rather than rushing to check off highlights..



### LATE MORNING - PLAZA DE ORIENTE & CORE

Step out into Plaza de Oriente and absorb the setting—the palace, gardens, and axial views. From here, walk east into the historic core. The transition is immediate: from royal formality to the dense, lived-in fabric of the city. Drift through Ópera toward Puerta del Sol, letting the streets guide you rather than following a fixed route.



### AFTERNOON & EVENING — OPEN

Leave the rest of the day unstructured - positioned to follow interest and energy—whether continuing deeper into the old city, returning to a neighborhood you liked, or pivoting to a completely different part of Madrid.



# MADRID



## OPTIONS – URBAN / SOCIAL ENERGY

### ROOFTOP SUNSET - AZOTEA DEL CÍRCULO

**Best time:** sunset / easy first night

One of the easiest high-reward experiences in Madrid. Take the elevator up and arrive about 45 minutes before sunset to watch the city shift from daylight into evening. The view stretches across Gran Vía and the historic core, giving a clear sense of Madrid's scale and density. Stay through twilight as the lights come on. It's a relaxed, social way to transition into the night without committing to a full evening plan.



### ROOFTOP SPECTACLE - HOTEL RIU PLAZA ESPAÑA

**Best for:** one-time wow view

A more dramatic, slightly theatrical rooftop experience. The glass skywalk and panoramic views make this feel like an event rather than a simple drink stop. It can be crowded, but that's part of the energy—people gathering for the same moment. Go once, enjoy the spectacle, and don't linger too long. Best paired with a simple plan afterward so it doesn't dominate the evening.



### TAPAS CRAWL - LA LATINA

**Best time:** late afternoon → evening

This is Madrid at its most social. Focus on the streets around Cava Baja and move from place to place rather than settling in. The rhythm is simple: one drink, one small plate, then on to the next. Stand at the bar, stay briefly, and follow the energy of the street. It's less about any one place and more about the flow between them.



### TAPAS NEAR HOME - CHUECA / SALESAS

**Best for:** low-effort evening

A lower-effort version of the tapas crawl that still delivers. Stay close to your Airbnb and let the neighborhood guide you. These areas offer a mix of lively and more refined spots, making it easy to find something that fits your mood. Ideal for your first night or any evening when you want a good experience without crossing the city. Keep it loose and unstructured—short stops, light bites, and an easy walk home.



# MADRID



## OPTIONS – CREATIVE / VINYL / TEXTURE

### MALASAÑA — RECORDS & STREET ENERGY

Best for: vinyl hunting + youthful energy

Madrid's most natural home for record shops and creative culture. Focus on the streets around Calle de la Palma, Corredera Alta de San Pablo, and Espíritu Santo, where independent shops and small bars create a dense, walkable loop. This is less about specific destinations and more about drifting between them—popping into record stores, pausing for a drink, and following whatever catches your eye. Best experienced in the late afternoon as the neighborhood comes alive.



### LAVAPIÉS — GRITTY / GLOBAL / UNPOLISHED

Best for: contrast + raw city texture

A different side of Madrid—more diverse, less curated, and intentionally a bit rough around the edges. Streets feel more global than traditionally Spanish, with layers of culture, food, and street life overlapping. This isn't a place to “see sights,” but to absorb a different rhythm of the city. Walk without a plan, trust your instincts, and don't overstay if it's not your scene. Best as a short, exploratory loop rather than a full evening..



### CONDE DUQUE — QUIET CREATIVE POCKET

Best for: low-key wandering + design shops

A calmer, more refined alternative to Malasaña. Centered around the Conde Duque cultural complex, this area has a slower pace and a mix of small galleries, design shops, and understated cafés. It's ideal when you want something creative without the intensity or crowds. Walk a few streets, stop where it feels right, and let the experience remain light. Works well as a midday or early evening option.



### CHUECA / SALESAS — POLISHED CREATIVE EDGE

Best for: easy, stylish exploration near home

Closer to your base, these neighborhoods offer a more polished version of Madrid's creative scene. You'll find boutique shops, well-designed interiors, and a mix of locals and visitors moving comfortably through the area. This is the easiest place to explore without effort—perfect for short windows of time or when you want something engaging but low commitment. Best used as a flexible fallback or a refined alternative to Malasaña.



# MADRID



## OPTIONS – WALKING THE CITY

### OLD MADRID — PLAZAS & PALACE WALK

**Best for: classic sights + how the city unfolds**

Start around Plaza Mayor and wander toward the Royal Palace, letting the city reveal itself as you go. Streets open into wide plazas, then narrow again, creating a natural rhythm as you move. Don't worry about seeing every interior—this is about experiencing how the city flows from one space to another. Keep a relaxed pace and enjoy the transitions rather than focusing on any single stop.



### GRAN VÍA & SIDE STREETS — FROM GRAND TO QUIET

**Best for: contrast + quick change of pace**

Walk along Gran Vía just long enough to take in its scale and energy, then turn off into the surrounding streets. The shift is immediate—busy and grand gives way to calm and local. Move back and forth a few times, stepping in and out of the main avenue. This simple pattern gives a strong feel for how Madrid balances spectacle with everyday life.



### SALAMANCA — ELEGANT GRID & REFINED STREETS

**Best for: calm walking + polished atmosphere**

A more orderly and elegant part of Madrid. The streets follow a clear grid, making it easy to walk without a plan. Buildings feel consistent and refined, creating a quieter, more composed atmosphere. This is a good place to slow down, take in the details, and enjoy a different side of the city without crowds or intensity.



### ATOCHA → PRADO — CITY TO PARK

**Best for: easy walking + culture meets green space**

This stretch connects some of Madrid's most important museums with wide boulevards and nearby green space. Walk it at a relaxed pace, noticing how the city opens up around you. It pairs naturally with your Prado visit, extending that experience into the surrounding streets and park. Keep it light—this is more about the feel of the city than checking off stops.



# MADRID

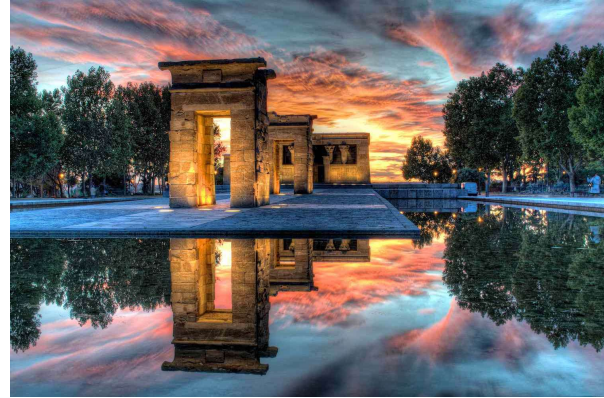


## OPTIONS – ARCHITECTURE & PLACES

### TEMPLE OF DEBOD — SUNSET & OPEN SKY

**Best for: sunset / atmosphere**

An authentic 2nd-century BC Egyptian temple, relocated to Madrid and set within a park on the city's western edge. The appeal is less about interior access and more about setting—open sky, long views, and a sequence of reflecting pools that catch the light at sunset. It's a short visit, but a memorable one, especially as the city begins to shift into evening. Plan to arrive 45–60 minutes before sunset and stay through dusk.



### PALACIO DE CIBELES — CITY VIEWPOINT

**Best for: views / quick stop**

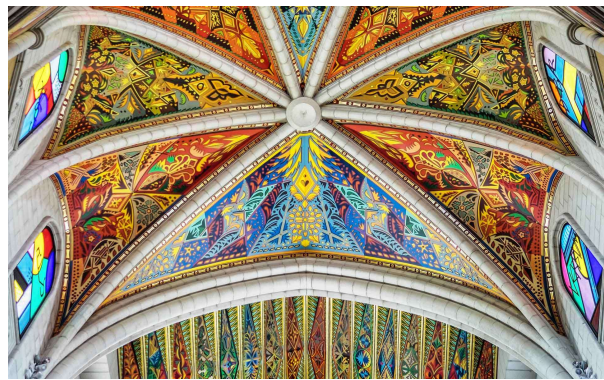
Madrid's City Hall, housed in an ornate early 20th-century building, offers one of the best elevated views of the city. A short elevator ride leads to a rooftop terrace overlooking Gran Vía, the Prado axis, and the broader urban fabric. The visit is structured, making it easy to fit into an afternoon or early evening. It's less about the building itself and more about understanding Madrid from above.



### ALMUDENA CATHEDRAL — INTERIOR & CRYPT

**Best for: interior contrast / short visit**

By the Royal Palace, Almudena Cathedral is relatively modern by European standards but offers a distinct interior experience. The main space is bright and colorful, departing from the darker tones of older cathedrals, while the crypt below returns to a more traditional, atmospheric character. It's a quick, self-contained visit that pairs naturally with the surrounding plaza and palace exterior.



### SAN ANTONIO DE LA FLORIDA — GOYA IN PLACE

**Best for: focused art / quiet stop**

A small chapel containing ceiling frescoes by Goya, offering a very different encounter than seeing his work in the Prado. The scale is intimate, and the experience is concentrated—looking up to take in the full composition rather than moving from painting to painting. Located slightly outside the center, it requires a bit more intention to reach, but rewards with a quiet, focused moment tied directly to the artist.



# MADRID



## OPTIONS – ACTIVE / EASY EXPERIENCES

### MADRID RÍO — BIKE OR RIVER WALK

Best for: movement + open space

A long, linear park that follows the Manzanares River, offering a completely different feel from the dense city center. Rent a bike or simply walk along the paths, moving at your own pace with no fixed destination. The space is open, relaxed, and easy to navigate, making it ideal when you want to move without thinking too much. This is less about sights and more about stretching out and resetting after time in the city.



### RETIRO PARK — WALK OR ROWBOAT

Best for: classic park experience + low effort

Madrid's most central green space and one of its most enjoyable breaks from the city. Walk shaded paths, sit by the water, or rent a small rowboat on the main pond for a simple, memorable experience. It's easy to enter and exit from multiple points, making it a natural addition to your Prado day. Keep it unstructured—this is about slowing down rather than seeing anything specific.



### CASA DE CAMPO — BIG NATURE ESCAPE

Best for: wide-open space + getting away from the city

A much larger and more rugged green space on the edge of Madrid. Trails, open land, and fewer crowds make this feel more like a true escape than a city park. It requires a bit more intention to reach but rewards you with space and quiet that's hard to find elsewhere in the city. Best if you're craving something expansive rather than another neighborhood walk.



### SHORT RESET — CAFÉ + SIT + PAUSE

Best for: quick recharge between activities

Sometimes the best option is to do very little. Find a café, order a drink, and sit without a plan. Madrid is a city that rewards pauses—watching people, absorbing the street, and letting the day settle. This works especially well in the late afternoon lull or between more structured activities. Treat it as intentional time, not a fallback.



# MADRID



## OPTIONS – MARKETS & EXPERIENCES

### MERCADO DE SAN MIGUEL — LIVELY FOOD HALL

Best for: **variety + high energy**

Madrid's most famous market, located just off Plaza Mayor. It's busy, polished, and designed for grazing—small bites, drinks, and movement. This is not a place to linger too long, but to sample a few things and move on. Expect crowds, especially later in the day. Best approached as a quick, energetic stop rather than a full meal.



### MERCADO DE ANTÓN MARTÍN – LOCAL, UNPOLISHED

Best for: **casual lunch + neighborhood feel**

A more grounded, everyday market with a mix of food stalls and local vendors. It's less curated than San Miguel and feels more like part of the neighborhood. This is a good place to slow down, grab something simple, and sit for a bit. Works well midday when you want something easy and authentic without the intensity of a more famous, curated market.

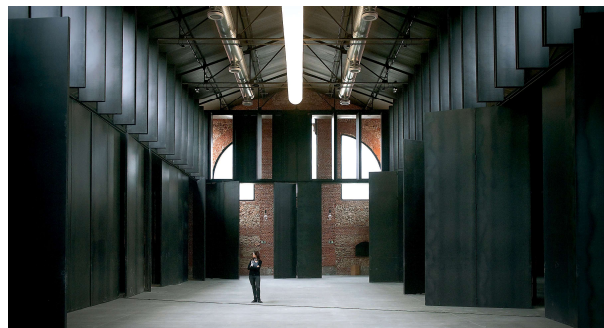


### MATADERO + MADRID RÍO - CULTURE & WATERFRONT

Best for: **visual arts + relaxed exploration**

A former slaughterhouse converted into a contemporary cultural complex of brick pavilions and open courtyards. The appeal is as much the industrial architecture as the programming—exhibitions, film, and events vary throughout the year. Before going, check the schedule (“Agenda”) to see if something aligns with your interests.

Pair this with Madrid Río, the landscaped riverfront just outside. Rent a bike or walk along the paths, moving easily between open green space and the city. This works well as a late afternoon outing—less about a single destination and more about a relaxed sequence of movement, space, and atmosphere.



# TO SEVILLE



Saturday, September 26, 2026

DAY 4 – HEADING SOUTH TO SEVILLE

## MORNING — DEPART MADRID



Check out of by 10:00 AM and make your way to the station to comfortably catch the 11:00 AM high-speed train to Seville. A taxi is the simplest option, typically 15–20 minutes depending on traffic—plan to leave around 10:15 AM to arrive with a small buffer. Once onboard, the journey is smooth and quiet, offering a transition between cities.

## MIDDAY — ARRIVAL & CHECK-IN



Arrive in Seville at 1:41 PM and take a taxi from the station to your apartment on Avenida de la Constitución. The ride is typically 10–15 minutes, though the final approach may be along a pedestrian stretch. After Madrid, the shift is immediate—narrower streets, warmer air, and a more compressed urban feel. Check in, unpack lightly, and take time to reset before heading out.

## LATE AFTERNOON — FIRST ORIENTATION



Step outside and begin with a short, low-effort loop anchored on your location. Walk along Avenida de la Constitución toward the cathedral, then continue briefly along its edge before turning into the smaller streets of Santa Cruz. Let the streets narrow and unfold naturally, then return toward the river or back to the apartment. Keep this brief and unstructured—the goal is simply to adjust to the scale and atmosphere of the city.

## EVENING — OPEN



Leave the evening flexible and follow energy and interest. Staying close works especially well here—step out along Avenida de la Constitución or into Santa Cruz for a simple meal or a few small bites. Use the options pages to shape the night depending on how you feel, keeping it easy and close to home.



# ANDALUCIA – HISTORY & CONTEXT

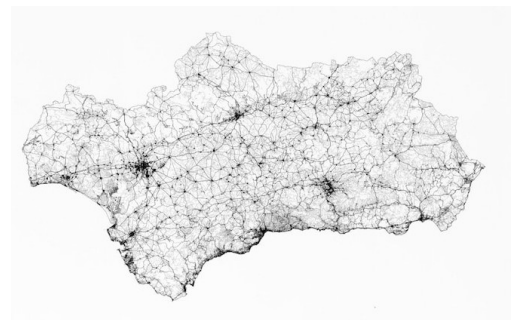
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Andalucía is shaped by a sequence of cultures that left lasting marks on the region. Under Rome, it formed part of Hispania Baetica, a prosperous province linked by roads, agriculture, and trade along the Guadalquivir. Cities such as Córdoba and Seville developed as key administrative and commercial centers.

After the fall of Rome, the region passed briefly under Visigothic control before the Islamic conquest of 711, which integrated it into Al-Andalus. Over the following centuries, Andalucía became one of the most advanced regions in Europe, with major centers in Córdoba, Seville, and Granada. Urban form emphasized courtyards, narrow streets, and water management suited to climate, while architecture focused on geometry, surface detail, and controlled light.

From the 13th century, Christian kingdoms gradually reconquered the region, often adapting rather than replacing what existed. This produced a hybrid architectural language, often described as Mudéjar, where Islamic forms continued under Christian rule.

The result is a layered environment where Roman infrastructure, Islamic urbanism, and Christian construction remain closely intertwined, shaping how cities are organized and experienced today.



## SEVILLE – CITY & CONTEXT

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Seville developed as a major river port, its position on the Guadalquivir linking inland Spain to the Atlantic. Founded as the Roman Hispalis, it grew under Islamic rule into a political and cultural center, with that structure still visible in the historic core.

After its reconquest in 1248, the city expanded without losing its underlying framework. The Alcázar reflects continued use of Islamic design under Christian rule, while the cathedral, built on the site of the former mosque, incorporates the Giralda, a converted minaret—an example of how earlier forms were adapted rather than erased.

In the 16th century, Seville became the primary port for trade with the Americas, bringing wealth and reshaping its civic and religious architecture.

What distinguishes Seville is how these layers remain compressed within a compact area. Movement follows long-established patterns—narrow streets, shaded passages, and enclosed spaces opening into plazas—so the experience is defined less by individual monuments than by the continuity of the urban fabric.

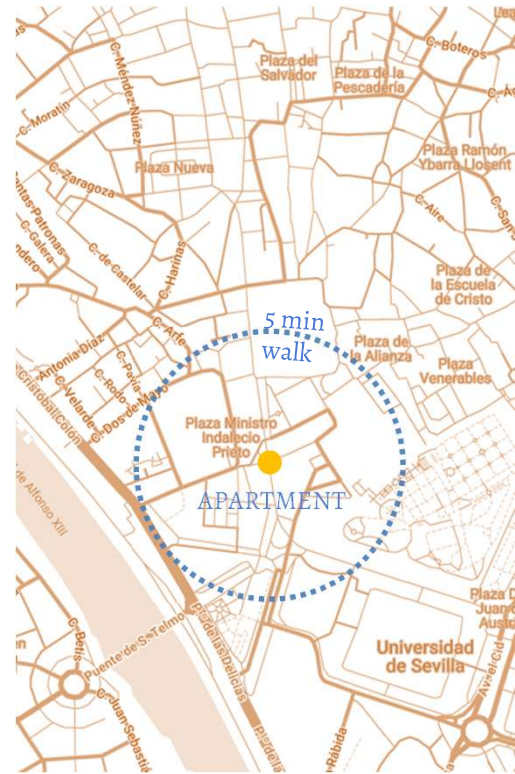
# APARTMENT IN SEVILLE



Avenida de la Constitución, 17

## THE APARTMENT

Set within a historic building on Avenida de la Constitución, the apartment sits directly in Seville's monumental core. The space is simple and modern, with a visible section of the 13th-century Almohade wall integrated into the room. A small Juliet balcony faces the Archivo de Indias and Cathedral, bringing light and a constant sense of the city just outside. Compact and efficient, it works well as a comfortable base between outings.



## THE NEIGHBORHOOD – SANTA CRUZ EDGE

This is the center of Seville in the most literal sense—set along the main axis connecting the Cathedral, Giralda, and Alcázar. Step outside and you are immediately within the city's most significant spaces, with narrow streets of Santa Cruz just beyond and broader avenues opening toward the river. Movement is intuitive: the historic core unfolds in every direction without the need for planning. During the day, the area carries a steady flow of visitors, but early mornings and evenings shift noticeably, revealing a quieter pace & a more local atmosphere in the surrounding streets.



## GETTING THERE

Arriving by train at Santa Justa Station, take a taxi for the simplest transfer—typically 10–15 minutes depending on traffic. Vehicles can approach Avenida de la Constitución, though the final stretch may be pedestrian-only, requiring a short walk. Once settled, the location eliminates most need for transit, with the Cathedral, Alcázar, and surrounding areas all within a few minutes on foot.



## FIRST ORIENTATION

Step out toward the Cathedral and Archivo de Indias to get your bearings, then drift briefly into Santa Cruz. The shift from open plazas to narrow streets happens quickly, giving a clear sense of the city's structure. Keep it short—just enough to orient before returning to reset.



# SEVILLE



## DAY 5 – ALCAZAR & THE HISTORIC CORE

### ALCÁZAR (PRE-BOOKED)



Start the day at the Real Alcázar, one of the most intricate and rewarding sites in Spain. Leave the apartment at 8:45 AM for a 5-minute walk, just around the cathedral edge, arriving a few minutes early and for a pre-booked 9:00 AM ticket. Once inside, move at a measured pace through the courtyards, rooms, and gardens. The detail is dense and layered, so resist the urge to rush—this is best experienced slowly.



### MIDDAY — CATHEDRAL & LUNCH



After the Alcázar, step directly out toward the cathedral and continue inside for a focused visit. The scale is immediate and overwhelming—a deliberate contrast to the intimacy of the Alcázar. Spend time in the main nave and beneath the central vaulting, then make your way up the Giralda if energy allows. Afterward, find a nearby shaded street or small plaza for lunch. Keep this simple and close—this is a natural pause after a dense and visually rich morning.



### AFTERNOON — SANTA CRUZ



Spend the afternoon exploring Santa Cruz, staying within a compact area just beyond the cathedral. The streets narrow quickly and the experience becomes more intimate—small passages, filtered light, and shifting views as you turn corners.



### EVENING — OPEN



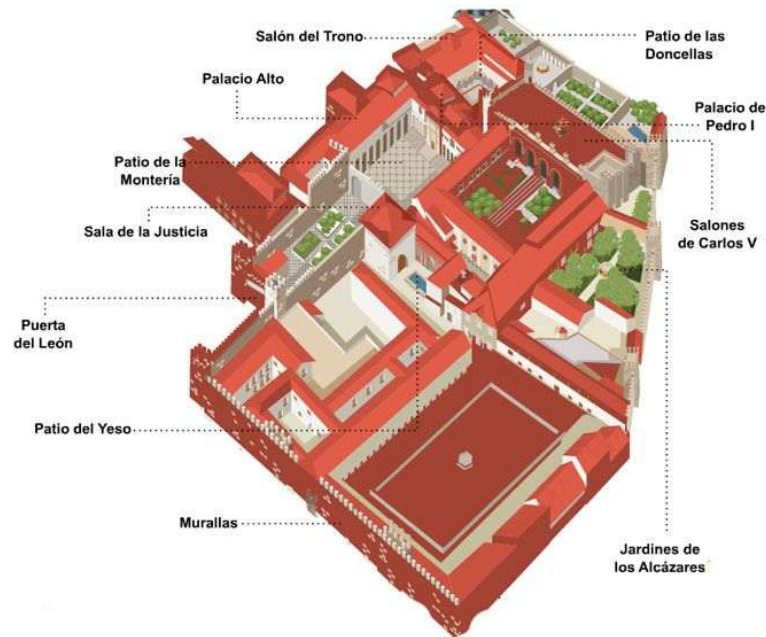
Leave the evening flexible and follow energy and interest. This is a good time to return to a place you noticed earlier or settle into a short sequence of small stops. Use the options pages to shape the night depending on mood, keeping movement easy and contained.



## REAL ALCAZAR

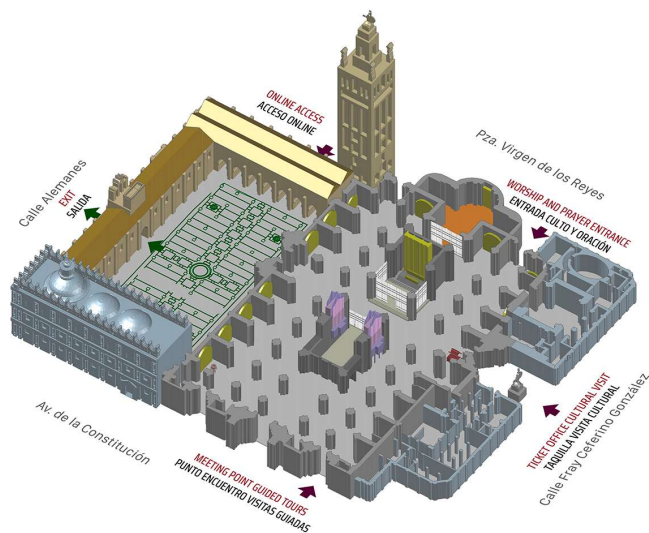
The Real Alcázar is a royal palace complex built in layers over centuries. Its most distinctive sections date to the 14th century, when Christian rulers employed Islamic craftsmen to create what is now called Mudéjar architecture—highly decorative surfaces, geometric tilework, carved plaster, and wood ceilings. Earlier Islamic foundations and later Renaissance additions are still visible, making the site a blend of different periods rather than a single unified design. This is still a working royal residence today, used by the Spanish royal family when in Seville.

The complex is best understood through its main courtyards and a select group of interior rooms rather than as a sequence to complete. Start with the Patio de las Doncellas, where the proportions and symmetry are most legible, then move through the adjacent rooms, paying attention to the walls and ceilings as much as the layout itself—much of the craftsmanship is above eye level. There is no need to linger everywhere; a steady pace works well. Save time for the gardens, which offer a quieter contrast and a natural place to slow down before leaving. Plan ~90–120 minutes overall.



## SEVILLE CATHEDRAL & GIRALDA

Seville Cathedral is the largest Gothic cathedral in the world, constructed in the 15th and 16th centuries on the site of a former mosque. Its scale reflects Seville's wealth and influence following the Reconquista, when the city became a major center of trade with the Americas. The building retains the footprint of the original mosque, and the Giralda tower is the preserved minaret, later adapted into a bell tower with a Renaissance addition at the top. The result is a structure defined less by individual elements and more by its overall size and presence.



The cathedral is best approached as a short, focused visit rather than something to work through in full. Start in the main nave and take a moment to understand the scale before moving on. From there, pass through a small number of side chapels without trying to see each one in detail. Make your way to the Columbus tomb, then continue toward the exit and up into the Giralda. The climb is gradual, using ramps rather than stairs, and the views at the top provide a clear sense of the city's layout. Plan for 45–60 minutes inside, with an additional 15–20 minutes for the tower.

# CORDOBA



Monday, September 28, 2026  
DAY 6 – DAY TRIP FROM SEVILLE

## MORNING — TRAIN TO CÓRDOBA



Leave the apartment around 8:45–9:00 AM and take a taxi to Santa Justa Station (10–15 minutes). Target a train around 9:30 AM, arriving in Córdoba at approximately 10:15 AM. The ride is short and straightforward, making this an easy day trip without much logistical effort.

## MIDDAY — MEZQUITA & LUNCH



From the station, take a short taxi or a 20-minute walk into the historic center and go directly to the Mezquita. This is the focus of the day. Keep the visit deliberate but not exhaustive—move through the main hall, take in the repeating arches, and allow time to experience the space without trying to see everything.

Stay close to the Mezquita and find a simple place for lunch in the surrounding streets. There's no need to search widely—this area offers plenty of options and keeps the day compact and easy.

## AFTERNOON — BRIDGE & SHORT WALK



Spend the afternoon in Córdoba's historic center, staying within a compact area around the Mezquita. Walk toward the river and cross the Roman Bridge for a view back toward the city. From there, take a short loop along the river or back through the surrounding streets.

## EVENING — RETURN TO SEVILLE



Head back to the station in the late afternoon for a return train around 5:00 PM, arriving in Seville by early evening. Keep this flexible depending on pace and energy. Back in Seville, leave the evening unstructured. A relaxed dinner near your apartment or a simple sequence of small stops works well after a focused day.



## CORDOBA – HISTORY & CONTEXT

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Córdoba began as the Roman city of Corduba, founded in the 2nd century BC and later made capital of the province of Hispania Baetica. It was an important administrative and commercial center, linked by roads and the Roman bridge across the Guadalquivir, which still defines the southern edge of the historic core.

After the Roman period, the city passed into Visigothic control. In 711, Córdoba was incorporated into the Islamic territories of Al-Andalus, and by the 8th century it had become a political center under the Umayyad rulers. Its peak came in the 10th century, when it served as the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate, one of the largest and most developed cities in Europe at the time.

The Mezquita was constructed and expanded during this period, forming a vast hall of columns and arches. Following the Christian conquest in 1236, it was converted into a cathedral, with a Renaissance nave inserted into the existing structure rather than replacing it.

Córdoba today is defined by this sequence—Roman infrastructure, Islamic architecture, and later Christian additions—all contained within a compact historic center.



# SEVILLE



Tuesday, September 29, 2026

DAY 7 – OPEN

## OPEN DAY

Use this as a flexible day shaped by energy and interest. Start with one light anchor—returning to a place you enjoyed or choosing a single area to explore more fully—then leave the rest open. Keep movement compact and avoid overplanning. This is a good day to use the options pages: pick one or two directions and let the day unfold without trying to cover too much.



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# SEVILLE

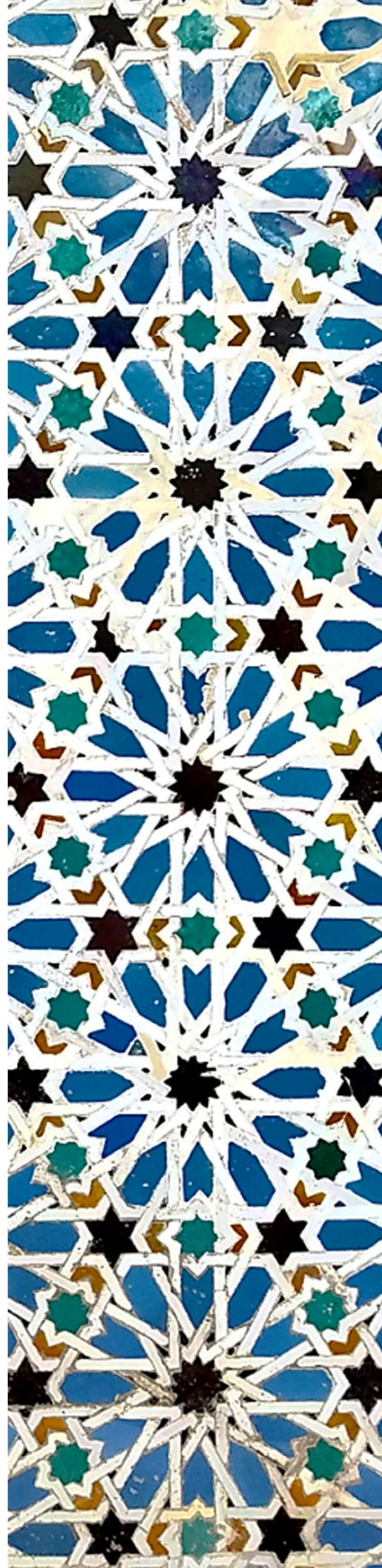


Wednesday, September 30, 2026

DAY 8 – OPEN

## OPEN DAY

Use this day to fill in anything you missed or revisit places that felt worth more time. If energy is high, this is also a good opportunity for a spontaneous day trip to Cádiz—an easy train ride and a clear contrast to Seville's density. Otherwise, stay in the city and keep the day relaxed, with a slower pace and an unstructured evening.



# SEVILLE



## OPTIONS – URBAN / SOCIAL ENERGY

### ALAMEDA DE HÉRCULES — LOCAL NIGHT BASE

**Best for:** unstructured evening / local energy

A broad plaza north of the center where Seville feels more contemporary and lived-in. Rather than choosing one place, move between bars along the edges and follow the flow of the crowd. The atmosphere is relaxed and local, with a younger mix than the historic core. This works best as a loose evening without a fixed plan—arrive, get a sense of the space, and let the night develop.



### TRIANA — RIVERSIDE EVENING

**Best for:** slower pace / change of setting

Cross the river into Triana for a different rhythm—less polished and more neighborhood-oriented. Start with a short walk along the river, then move into the side streets for a drink or light dinner. The mix of older taverns and newer spots makes it easy to shape the evening as you go. This is a good way to step outside the center without overcommitting to a full plan.



### MACARENA — EVERYDAY STREET LIFE

**Best for:** local feel / daytime or early evening

Head north into the Macarena district for a more grounded view of Seville. Streets here are less curated, with small shops, cafés, and daily activity unfolding at a slower pace. Walk without a plan and let the area reveal itself gradually. This works best as a short, exploratory loop rather than a fixed destination.



### FLAMENCO — SMALL VENUE EXPERIENCE

**Best for:** focused cultural experience

If you want to see flamenco, choose a smaller venue rather than a large production. Look for intimate settings such as Casa de la Memoria or a local peña, where the performance is direct and close to the audience. Avoid dinner-and-show formats and larger staged productions. The experience is typically shorter and more concentrated, making it easy to pair with a simple plan before or after.



# SEVILLE



## OPTIONS – WALKING THE CITY / ARCHITECTURE & PLACES

### CATHEDRAL EDGE → SANTA CRUZ — SECOND PASS

**Best for:** revisiting / filling in missed details

Return to the cathedral edge and step back into Santa Cruz with a more focused approach. Instead of wandering broadly, choose one or two elements to explore more closely—quieter side streets, small plazas, or an interior you passed earlier. The experience will feel different on a second pass, with less orientation and more attention to detail. Keep this contained and deliberate rather than turning it into another full loop.



### METROPOL PARASOL (LAS SETAS) — MODERN VIEW

**Best for:** contrast / elevated perspective

A contemporary structure inserted into the historic fabric, offering an elevated walk above the city. Go near sunset for softer light and a clearer sense of how the historic core sits within a larger urban context. This is less about the structure itself and more about the perspective it provides.



### HOSPITAL DE LA CARIDAD — BAROQUE INTERIOR

**Best for:** quiet interior / architectural detail

A 17th-century charitable hospital with a richly detailed interior that contrasts with the scale of the cathedral. The space is contained and highly worked, with attention concentrated on surfaces and composition. It's an easy visit to miss, but worth seeking out if you want a deeper architectural experience beyond the major sites.



### PLAZA DE ESPAÑA → MARÍA LUISA PARK

**Best for:** open space / slower pace

Move south into María Luisa Park and continue to Plaza de España, where the city opens up into a more formal and expansive setting. This is a clear contrast to the density of the historic center—wider paths, longer views, and a more relaxed pace. Best approached as a longer, slower walk rather than a quick stop.



# SEVILLE



## OPTIONS – ACTIVE / RECREATION

### BIKE LOOP — RIVER + CARTUJA (EXPO '92)

**Best for:** covering distance / architectural contrast

Rent a bike and follow the Guadalquivir north, then cross into Isla de la Cartuja. Paths are flat and easy, and the shift from historic center to open, modern ground is immediate. The area still carries traces of Expo '92—wide spaces, scattered structures, and a quieter atmosphere. This is one of the easiest ways to expand your range without much effort.



### RIVER WALK — BEYOND THE CENTER

**Best for:** longer walk / decompressing

Follow the river away from the core, either north toward Cartuja or south past the main tourist areas. The crowds thin quickly and the experience becomes more open and relaxed. This works well in the late afternoon, when the light softens and the pace slows. It's less about a destination and more about creating space after time in the dense center.



### ISLA DE LA CARTUJA — OPEN & CONTEMPORARY EDGE

**Best for:** exploration / quiet contrast

Cross into Cartuja on foot or by bike and move through a landscape that feels distinctly separate from the historic city. Former Expo grounds and contemporary uses sit within large, open spaces, with fewer people and less structure to movement. It can feel slightly disjointed, but that's part of the experience—a contrast to Seville's density and a different way to engage the city.



### CALLE BETIS — SUNSET ALONG THE RIVER

**Best for:** evening light / simple atmosphere

Walk or pause along Calle Betis on the Triana side of the river, facing back toward the historic skyline. This is one of the simplest high-reward moments in the city—no plan needed beyond timing. Arrive near sunset, find a place to sit or lean along the edge, and let the light and activity build gradually as evening begins.



# SEVILLE



## OPTIONS – FOOD & SHOPPING

### MERCADO DE FERIA — LOCAL MARKET

*Best for: everyday feel / midday stop*

An older, more grounded market north of the center with a mix of food stalls and local vendors. Less curated than central options, it works best as a short, informal stop rather than a destination meal. Walk through, pick up something simple, and move on. The surrounding streets make it easy to fold into a broader wander.



### TRIANA — CERAMICS & WORKSHOPS

*Best for: craft / tactile experience*

In Triana, move beyond the main strip to find smaller ceramic shops and working studios. This is where Seville's tile tradition is still active, from simple pieces to more refined work. Take your time browsing rather than targeting a single shop—the experience is as much about the craft as it is about buying something.



### EL RINCONCILLO — TRADITIONAL BAR STOP

*Best for: quick stop / historic atmosphere*

One of the oldest bars in Seville but still works if approached simply. Stand at the bar, order one drink and a small plate, and move on. The interior is compact and traditional, with a steady local rhythm. Best treated as part of a sequence rather than a full meal.



### CALLE REGINA / SETAS AREA — INDEPENDENT SHOPS

*Best for: small finds / contemporary edge*

Near Metropol Parasol, this area offers a mix of smaller, independent shops alongside everyday retail. It's less about major purchases and more about browsing—design items, clothing, and local brands that feel current without being overly polished. Works well as a short detour between other activities.



### CONVENT SWEETS — HIDDEN TRADITION

*Best for: unique local experience*

Some convents in Seville still produce and sell traditional sweets, often through a simple counter or turntable window. The process is quiet and understated, and the experience feels distinctly local. This is less about finding the “best” item and more about participating in a long-standing tradition.



# SEVILLE



## OPTIONS – DAY TRIP TO CADIZ

### SEVILLE → CÁDIZ — GETTING THERE

Take a direct train from Santa Justa to Cádiz (about 1 hr 30–45 min). Aim for a departure around 9:00–9:30 AM, arriving late morning. The station sits at the edge of the historic center, making arrival simple. Return in the late afternoon or early evening—trains run regularly, so timing can stay flexible based on weather and energy.

### MIDDAY — OLD TOWN & WATERFRONT

From the station, walk directly into the historic core. Cádiz is compact and easy to navigate—focus on a short loop rather than covering everything. Move toward the cathedral and continue out to the water, where the city opens to the Atlantic. This portion of the day is best kept light and unstructured, with time to pause rather than push through a list.

### AFTERNOON — BEACH & RESET

Head to La Caleta or Playa de la Victoria for a few hours by the water. Even a short stretch here provides a clear contrast to Seville's density. Walk, sit, or take a swim if the weather allows. This is the main reason to make the trip—keep it simple and unhurried rather than trying to fit in additional sights.

### RETURN — BACK TO SEVILLE

Head back to the station in the late afternoon for a return train around 5:30–6:30 PM, arriving in Seville early evening. Keep the return loose—this day works best when you leave space to adjust. Back in Seville, keep dinner simple and close to home.



## CADIZ

*One of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in Western Europe, Cádiz has roots in Phoenician settlement and later became an important Roman port. Its position on a narrow peninsula gives it a distinct character—surrounded by water, with open views and a constant Atlantic presence. Unlike Seville, the experience here is defined by light, air, and horizon rather than density.*

# TO GRANADA

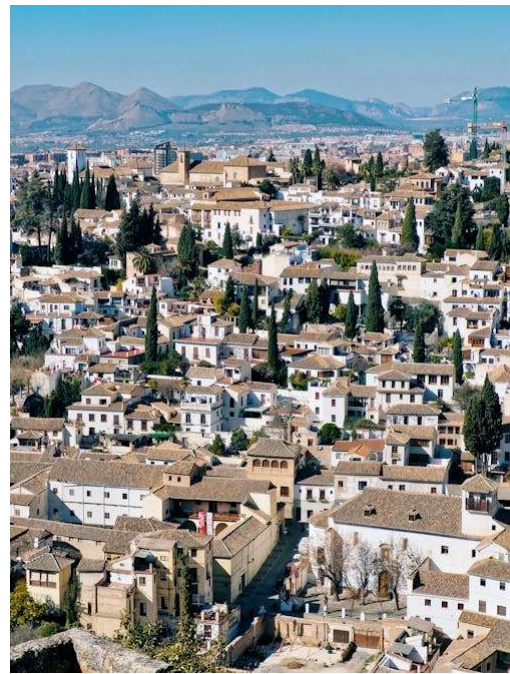


Thursday, October 1, 2026  
DAY 9 – HEADING TO GRANADA

## MORNING — DEPART SEVILLE



Check out and take a taxi to Santa Justa (10–15 minutes). A mid-morning train (around 10:00–11:00 AM) works well, arriving in Granada early afternoon. The journey is direct and comfortable, transitioning from the river plain into more mountainous terrain.



## MIDDAY — ARRIVAL & CHECK-IN



Arrive in Granada around 1:30–2:00 PM and take a taxi to your hotel (10–15 minutes). After check-in, take a short break for a light late lunch in the streets around the cathedral. The city is more compact and vertical than Seville, with a different rhythm and terrain.



## AFTERNOON — FIRST ORIENTATION



Begin near the Granada Cathedral, using it as a point of reference before moving through Plaza Bib-Rambla and into the Alcaicería, a compact network of narrow lanes that traces the former Moorish silk market. Continue outward toward Carrera del Darro, one of Granada's most distinctive streets, running along the river at the base of the Albaicín. Follow it briefly to understand the relationship between the lower city and the hillside above. If time and energy allow, continue partway up into the Albaicín toward a viewpoint such as Mirador de San Nicolás; otherwise, save the full climb for the evening. Return toward the cathedral and go inside when it reopens, using it as a final anchor before resetting.



## EVENING — OPEN



With only one night, choose one clear direction rather than trying to do too much. A walk into the Albaicín toward a viewpoint (such as San Nicolás) gives a direct relationship to the Alhambra at dusk. Pair this with a simple dinner nearby or return closer to your hotel and keep the evening easy. Use the options page to refine this.



# GRANADA – CITY & CONTEXT

Granada developed at the foot of the Sierra Nevada, its position defined by steep terrain and the meeting of the Darro and Genil rivers. Settled in Roman times as Iliberis, it became more prominent under Islamic rule, eventually emerging as the capital of the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada, the last Muslim state on the Iberian Peninsula.

From the 13th to 15th centuries, Granada grew as a fortified and highly organized city. The Albaicín formed its dense hillside core, with narrow streets, inward-facing houses, and a strong relationship to water and topography. Across the valley, the Alhambra was established as a separate royal complex, physically distinct yet visually dominant.

In 1492, Granada fell to the Catholic Monarchs, marking the end of Islamic rule in Spain. As elsewhere in Andalucía, the city was transformed but not erased. Churches were built over mosques, and new civic structures were introduced, while the underlying urban fabric remained largely intact.

Granada is distinguished by this direct relationship between city and monument. The Alhambra is not embedded within the urban core but set apart, always visible from below. Movement through Granada is therefore defined by slope, distance, and viewpoint, with the city and the Alhambra in constant visual dialogue.



## THE ALHAMBRA – SITE & SIGNIFICANCE

The Alhambra is a royal palace complex developed by the Nasrid dynasty between the 13th and 15th centuries. Positioned on a wooded ridge above the city, it combines fortified walls, palaces, gardens, and service areas into a single, highly controlled environment.

Its most distinctive spaces are the Nasrid Palaces, where architecture is defined less by structure than by surface and sequence. Rooms are arranged around courtyards with transitions managed through scale, light, and proportion. Materials are modest: plaster, tile, wood, but elaborated through intricate carving, geometric pattern, & calligraphy.

Water plays a central role, both visually and spatially. Reflecting pools, channels, and fountains organize movement and reinforce symmetry, while also moderating the climate. The Generalife extends these ideas into a more open garden setting, where architecture and landscape are closely integrated.

After the Christian conquest, the Alhambra was partially adapted but largely preserved, including the insertion of the Palace of Charles V within the complex. Unlike other sites, it remains a relatively unified expression of late Islamic design.



# GRANADA



Friday, October 2, 2026

## DAY 10 – ALHAMBRA + RETURN TO MADRID

### MORNING — ALHAMBRA (PRE-BOOKED)

Check-out of the hotel around 8:10 AM, leaving your luggage with the concierge. Take a 10–15 minutes taxi ride to the Alhambra entrance, arriving at the gates by 8:25–8:30 AM for opening. Move toward the Nasrid Palaces without rushing. Follow a structured sequence built around your 9:00 AM timed entry:

8:30–9:00 → Entry and light orientation

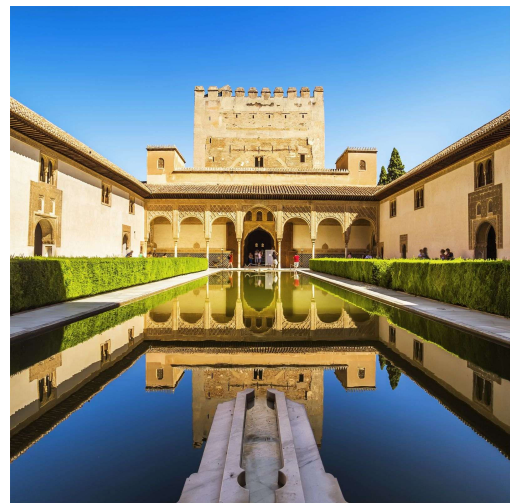
9:00–10:15 → Nasrid Palaces

10:15–10:30 → Walk to the Alcazaba (transition and reset)

10:30–11:00 → Alcazaba (fortress and towers)

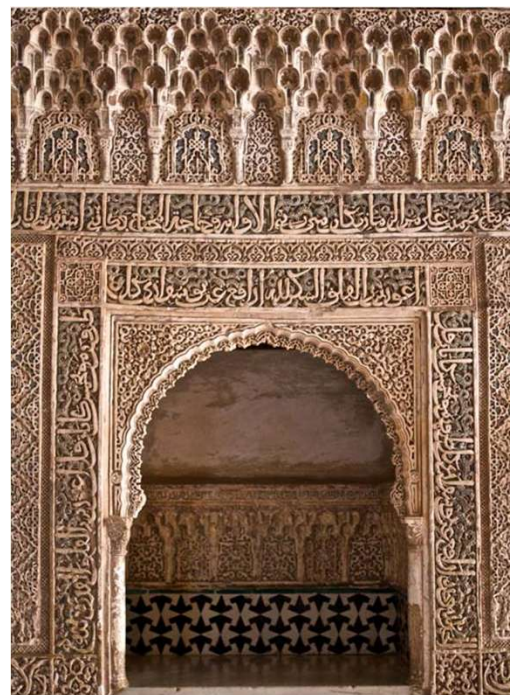
11:00–12:00 → Generalife Gardens

Exit around 12:00 PM, completing a full visit without extending beyond the core experience.



### MIDDAY — RESET + FINAL TIME IN GRANADA

Return to central Granada around 1:00 PM for a short break and a simple lunch nearby. After a reset, the afternoon remains open for one additional, focused activity within the central area. See the next pages for options.



### AFTERNOON — TRANSIT TO MADRID

Walk back to the hotel to grab your bags, and depart for the train station around 5:15–5:30 PM for your 6:10 PM train, arriving in Madrid around 10:00 PM. Food service on board is limited to light options, so plan to pick up something simple in Granada to bring on the train, supplementing with drinks or snacks as needed.

### EVENING — ARRIVAL IN MADRID

At Atocha Station, the NH Madrid Atocha hotel is located directly adjacent to the station, allowing for a short walk and immediate check-in. Settle-in and prepare for tomorrow's flight home



# GRANADA



## OPTIONS

### SECOND PASS — DARRO & LOWER ALBAICÍN

*Best for: detail / short, focused walk*

Return to Carrera del Darro, following the river past stone bridges (Puente del Cadí) and buildings set close to the water. Look for balconies, carved stone details, and narrow passages leading uphill. Continue briefly toward Paseo de los Tristes, a small open space at the base of the hill with a clear view up to the Alhambra. From there, take a short climb into the lower Albaicín to see how quickly the streets tighten and turn. This is a compact loop that adds detail without requiring a long walk.



### GRANADA CATHEDRAL — INTERIOR FOCUS

*Best for: key spaces / quick visit*

Inside, focus on a few specific elements: the Capilla Mayor, a large circular space filled with light and gold-toned decoration; the choir stalls positioned within the nave; and several side chapels, each with distinct altarpieces and detailing. The interior is bright and orderly, with clear sightlines through the space. If open, consider a quick look into the Royal Chapel (Capilla Real) next door, where Ferdinand and Isabella are buried.



### ALCAICERÍA — FORMER SILK MARKET

*Best for: local feel / daytime or early evening*

This area was Granada's Moorish silk market, rebuilt but following the original layout of narrow, enclosed streets. Today it is a compact grid of small shops selling ceramics, textiles, spices, and souvenirs. Walk through the main corridors, then turn into side passages to see how the lanes connect and narrow. Step just outside the market into adjacent streets to understand its location within the center. The visit is brief, but it provides a clear link to Granada's earlier role as a controlled commercial hub.



# GRANADA



## OPTIONS

### MIRADOR DE SAN NICOLÁS — SUNSET VIEW

*Best for: classic view / early evening*

Plan to be here at sunset on Day 1. The viewpoint faces the Alhambra across the valley, with the Sierra Nevada often visible behind. The square is active—street musicians, small vendors, and people gathering for the view. Expect crowds; arrive a bit early to find space along the edge or just off to the side. As the light fades, the Alhambra shifts from warm tones to full illumination. This is the most recognizable view in Granada and a clear way to understand how the palace sits above the city.



### TAPAS — GRANADA STYLE

*Best for: simple dinner / local custom*

Granada is known for serving a free tapa with each drink, a tradition that still holds in many bars. Stay near your hotel—Calle Navas and surrounding streets offer a dense cluster of reliable spots. Order a drink, receive a small plate, and move on after one or two stops if you wish. Typical offerings include jamón, small stews, fried fish, croquettes, or potatoes, varying by bar. There's no need to seek out a specific restaurant—this works best as a casual, flexible dinner.



### EVENING — ALHAMBRA FROM BELOW

*Best for: night view / quiet finish*

After dark, walk along the Darro or into the lower Albaicín and look back toward the illuminated Alhambra. The lighting highlights the walls, towers, and overall outline of the complex against the hillside. This area is quieter than the main mirador and works well after dinner, especially along stretches of the river where the view opens slightly. Keep the route short and close to your hotel, using this as a final, low-key moment before returning for the night.



# MADRID



Saturday, October 3, 2026  
DAY 11 – HEADING HOME

## MORNING — DEPART MADRID



Plan to check out of the hotel around 9:30–10:00 AM. From NH Madrid Atocha, allow 20–25 minutes by taxi to reach the airport. For a 12:20 PM flight, aim to arrive by 10:15–10:30 AM, giving adequate time for check-in, security, and boarding. Keep the morning simple—pack the night before and leave without adding extra stops.

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## FLIGHT DETAILS



Iberia Airline Confirmation: PNZXXN  
American Airlines Flight 8729  
Madrid (MAD) - Washington DC (IAD)  
12:20 PM - 3:30 PM

