

A photograph of the Royal Palace of Madrid, a large, light-colored stone building with many windows and classical architectural details. In the foreground, a tall, ornate black and gold lamp post with three lanterns stands prominently. The sky is overcast and grey.

| VISIT GUIDE 2026

the Royal Palace of Madrid

Madrid · From 22€

<https://palacio-real-de-madrid.visit-tickets.com/en/> · Skip-the-line tickets & rates



History & experience

ORIGIN & HISTORY

Born from Fire: A Baroque Masterpiece

GOOGLE **4.7** ★★★★★ 133 407 reviews

TIQETS **4.5** ★★★★★ 1 676 reviews

The Royal Palace of Madrid stands as the official residence of the Spanish monarchy, a monumental testament to Baroque grandeur that dominates the city's skyline. With an impressive surface area of **135,000 m²** and 3,418 rooms, it is recognized as the largest palace in Western Europe. This architectural masterpiece was commissioned by Philip V following the catastrophic fire of 1734 that destroyed the old Royal Alcázar, transforming a site of tragedy into one of unparalleled splendor.

Construction began in 1738 under the direction of Filippo Juvarra, whose ambitious plans were later adapted by Juan Bautista Sacchetti to fit the original fortress foundations. The project involved a team of distinguished architects, including Francesco Sabatini, who oversaw the final completion and decorative expansions. Charles III became the first monarch to reside in the palace without interruption, establishing it as the center of royal protocol and state affairs for generations to come.

Beyond its role as a residence, the palace houses extraordinary artistic collections that reflect centuries of Spanish history. It preserves the complete set of **Palatine Stradivarius** instruments, a unique musical heritage, alongside masterpieces by Caravaggio, Velázquez, and Goya. The interiors are adorned with frescoes by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, offering visitors a glimpse into the opulent lifestyle of the Bourbon dynasty and the cultural zenith of 18th-century Spain.

Even during periods of political change, the palace maintained its significance. Manuel Azaña, the last head of state to reside there during the Second Republic, left his mark on the building, particularly in the room near the royal chapel known today as "Azaña's office." This historical continuity underscores the palace's enduring importance as a symbol of national identity and a repository of invaluable cultural treasures managed by Patrimonio Nacional.

THE EXPERIENCE

Stepping through the main entrance, visitors are immediately struck by the sheer scale and luminous elegance of the interior spaces. The marble floors stretch endlessly, reflecting the soft light from high windows that illuminates the gilded details of the ceilings. There is a profound sense of awe as one moves from the grand salons to the intimate chambers, each room revealing a new layer of artistic mastery and historical depth.

The atmosphere is one of quiet reverence, where the hum of modern tourism fades against the weight of centuries. As you walk past the Throne Room or the Mirror Room, the intricate craftsmanship of the period becomes tangible. The experience is not just about viewing art, but about feeling the presence of the monarchs who once walked these halls, creating a deeply immersive journey through time.



PREPARE YOUR VISIT

Practical information

ADDRESS Central Madrid · Metro: Bailén (L1, L2) or Ópera (L2, Plaza de Oriente exit), 5 min walk.	OPENING HOURS Hours vary by season (April-Sept vs Oct-March) and day (Mon-Sat vs Sun). Check the official website before visiting.
FARES Free for children depending on age (check variants). {promo}.	VISIT DURATION Plan for 2 to 3 hours for a complete visit of the grand salons and collections. With the Royal Collections Gallery, allow an additional half-day.
PHOTOS Photography is allowed without flash in public rooms. Tripods and flashes are prohibited during protocol or private events held in the palace.	AUDIENCE Ideal for families, couples, and first-time visitors. The marble floors and length of the route (3,418 pieces) require comfortable shoes for all ages.

HOW TO GET THERE

Access & transport

	Metro : Arenal — 5 min à pied Madrid-Atocha Station (12 min) · Plaza de España (8 min)
	Bus : Palacio Real — 5 min à pied Madrid-Atocha Station (17 min) · Plaza de España (11 min)
	Car Madrid-Atocha Station (11 min) · Plaza de España (5 min)
	BiciMAD / Bike Madrid-Atocha Station (13 min) · Plaza de España (5 min)

LOCALISATION

Où se trouve the Royal Palace of Madrid ?



 s/n, Calle de Bailén — 28071 Madrid

 40°25.077' N, 3°42.859' O



ORGANIZATION

Navigating the Grand Salons

Ground Floor (Grand Salons)

This level features the most famous reception rooms, including the Throne Room and the Hall of Mirrors. Visitors encounter the largest paintings and the most elaborate gilded decorations here. The space is designed for state ceremonies, showcasing the power of the monarchy through scale and luxury.

Upper Floors (Royal Apartments)

These levels house the private quarters of the kings and queens, offering a glimpse into their daily lives. The rooms are smaller but richly decorated with personal items, portraits, and furniture from various periods. It is a quieter section of the visit, allowing for a more intimate connection with the history.

Special Collections & Galleries

Dedicated areas display the Palatine Stradivarius instruments, the Royal Armory, and collections of porcelain and silverware. These sections require careful observation to appreciate the technical skill and artistic value of the objects. They provide a comprehensive view of the palace's role as a museum of royal heritage.

ACCESSIBILITY



Disabled Access

Main entrance adapted with elevators; some upper levels may present difficulties, contact the access



Families

Children welcome, under 5 free; plan breaks as the visit is long with 3,418 pieces and marble floors



Audio guide

French, English, Spanish



Must-sees

SELECTION

Must-See Treasures of the Palace

01

Sala del Trono

Throne Room

The centerpiece of the palace, this room is dominated by the massive throne and large-scale paintings by Goya and Velázquez. The ceiling features a dramatic fresco depicting the apotheosis of Charles IV. It is the most photographed spot due to its overwhelming grandeur and historical significance.

💡 The room was designed to impress foreign ambassadors, serving as a stage for diplomatic displays of power.

02

GIOVANNI BATTISTA TIEPOLO Grand Salons

Tiepolo Frescoes

These painted ceilings adorn several major rooms, showcasing the artist's mastery of perspective and color. Hurried visitors often overlook them, staying at ground level, but looking up reveals masterpieces of Spanish Baroque art. The frescoes depict allegorical scenes that celebrate the monarchy.

💡 Tiepolo worked on these projects for years, traveling between Italy and Spain to complete the commission.

03

ANTONIO STRADIVARI Music Gallery

Palatine Stradivarius

This collection includes the complete set of musical instruments made by Stradivari for the Spanish court. It is a unique musical heritage preserved within the palace walls. The instruments testify to the high artistic standards of the era and the love of music by the Bourbon kings.

💡 The set was acquired by Philip V, who was passionate about music and collected many rare instruments.

04

Salón de Espejos

Hall of Mirrors

Inspired by the famous hall in Versailles, this room features a series of mirrors that create an illusion of infinite space. The lighting is carefully controlled to enhance the reflective surfaces. It is a favorite spot for families and couples seeking a magical photo opportunity.

💡 The mirrors were imported from Venice, representing a significant expense for the royal treasury at the time.

05

Capilla Real

Royal Chapel

This sacred space is used for religious ceremonies and burials of royal family members. The interior is decorated with gold leaf and religious iconography. It offers a moment of solemnity amidst the secular grandeur of the palace.

💡 Philip V, the first Bourbon king, is buried here, marking the beginning of the Bourbon dynasty's presence in the palace.

06

Near Royal Chapel

Azaña's Office

This room preserves the desk of Manuel Azaña, the last head of state to reside in the palace during the Second Republic. It serves as a reminder of the changing political landscape of Spain. The space is modest compared to the surrounding royal apartments.

💡 Azaña occupied the rooms previously used by Queen Marie-Christine, symbolizing the shift from monarchy to republic.

07

Real Armería

Royal Armory

This collection displays weapons and armor from various periods of Spanish history. It includes pieces from the medieval era to the 19th century. The armory highlights the military prowess of the Spanish crown and the evolution of warfare.

💡 Some of the armor was used in actual battles, bearing the scars of conflict.

08

Porcelain Gallery

Porcelain Collection

The palace houses one of the finest collections of Chinese and European porcelain. The delicate pieces showcase the trade routes and artistic exchanges of the time. It is a subtle but important aspect of the palace's decorative history.

💡 Many of the porcelain pieces were gifts from other European courts, strengthening diplomatic ties.

TIPS

Essential Tips for Your Visit

TIMING

Arrive right at your time slot to avoid queues that can reach 2 hours during peak times. Aim for weekday early afternoon for a calmer experience.

BILLET

Book a skip-the-line ticket if possible, especially in high season. Note that security checks remain mandatory and add 10-25 minutes.

PARCOURS

Start at the Plaza de Oriente to admire the façade before entering. Focus on the Throne Room and Tiepolo frescoes if you are short on time.

PHOTO

Photography is allowed without flash in public rooms. The exterior from the Sabatini Gardens offers the best panoramic shots of the palace.

PAUSE

Plan breaks in the nearby gardens or cafés located immediately close by. This is essential for children and anyone needing a rest from the long route.

ENFANTS

Children under 5 enter free. Plan stops every 30-45 minutes to keep them engaged, as the 3,418 pieces can be tiring for young visitors.

AUDIOGUIDE

The audioguide is available in 16 languages and highly recommended for understanding the context of the Palatine Stradivarius and key artworks. It adds depth to the visual experience.

CONFORT

Wear comfortable shoes as the floor is mostly marble and stone across the 135,000 m² complex. The cumulative distance is considerable for a full visit.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

Do I need to book my ticket for the Royal Palace of Madrid?

Yes, booking is highly recommended, especially in high season (July-August) and on weekends. Without a time slot, expect 60 to 120 minutes of waiting plus security checks. Book online to guarantee entry and avoid long li

Does the skip-the-line ticket avoid security checks?

No, the skip-the-line ticket only avoids the queue for purchase or access. Security checks remain mandatory for all visitors, adding 10 to 25 minutes. Allow for this extra time in your visit plan.

Can I cancel or modify my booking?

Conditions vary depending on the ticket type and time of purchase. Most online tickets offer free cancellation up to 24h before the visit. Always check the fine print when confirming your online purchase.

Is there a current promo on tickets?

Reduced rates exist for children (5-16 years), seniors (65+ years), and students (up to 25 years). The standard rate is €18 for the self-guided tour. Check the official website regularly for special offers or combined ti

How long does the Royal Palace visit take?

Allow 2 to 3 hours minimum to discover the main salons and collections. With 3,418 pieces, the visit can extend if you want to see everything. For a complete experience including the Royal Collections Gallery, plan for a

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

Larger than Buckingham

With its 3,418 rooms, the palace is almost twice as large in surface area as Buckingham Palace or the Palace of Versailles. This exceptional size makes it the largest palace in Western Europe. Its scale is a testament to the ambition of the Bourbon dynasty.

Born from a Fire

The palace was built after the destruction of the Royal Alcázar by a fire in 1734. Philip V ordered the reconstruction, reusing the foundations of the old fortress. This tragic episode justified the replacement of the old building with a modern Baroque masterpiece.

First Resident King

Charles III was the first monarch to live in the palace without interruption. Construction started in 1738 and was completed notably by Francesco Sabatini. It was under his reign that the palace truly became the center of royal life.

Seventh Most Visited

In 2016, the palace welcomed over 1.4 million visitors, ranking it as the seventh most-visited monument in Spain. This massive attendance confirms its status as a must-see site for tourists and locals alike.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

Located in the heart of Central Madrid, the palace is surrounded by iconic landmarks perfect for extending your day. Just across the Plaza de Oriente, you will find the **Royal Theatre**, a Baroque gem that complements the palace's aesthetic. For a panoramic view over the city's rooftops, climb to the Sabatini Gardens, a terrace green space offering exceptional vistas. After your visit, stroll to the Sol District for lunch among lively squares and traditional restaurants. The Prado Museum is also in the immediate vicinity, housing further masterpieces by Goya and Velázquez mentioned in the royal tour, making it easy to combine history with world-class art in a single day.



Leaving the Royal Palace, you carry with you more than memories; you hold a piece of European history. The blend of **Baroque splendor** and personal narrative makes this visit unforgettable. Whether you are drawn by the music of the Stradivarius or the brushstrokes of Goya, the palace offers a unique emotional resonance that lingers long after you have returned to the streets of Madrid.