

TRANSPORT

Getting to Madrid couldn't be easier with the city served by almost 100 airlines, excellent bus networks and trains that radiate into and out from the Spanish capital. The environmentally conscious also have an increasing number of options with the ongoing expansion of Spain's high-speed rail network – the early-2008 inauguration of the high-speed rail link between Madrid and Barcelona has brought Madrid that much closer to the rest of Europe.

Moving around the city is even simpler, with Madrid's extensive, modern metro system all you're likely to need. There are also plenty of buses, as well as reasonably priced taxis.

Flights, tours and rail tickets can be booked online at lonelyplanet.com.

AIR

Madrid's Barajas airport is Europe's fourth busiest hub, trailing only London-Heathrow, Paris Charles de Gaulle and Frankfurt, although it's rapidly closing in on the latter.

In addition to flights from the rest of Europe there are direct intercontinental flights from Asia, North and South America; some flights from North America involve a change at another major European hub en route.

Major low-cost airlines operating out of Madrid include easyJet, Air Berlin, Ryanair

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

and Vueling. These airlines work on a first-come, first-serve basis: the earlier you book a flight the less you pay. These no-frills airlines skip extras, such as in-flight meals (although you can buy snacks).

Domestic air travel can be expensive, but things are definitely changing. Iberia, Air Europa and Spanair, who once had a stranglehold over the market, now compete with many other international low-cost airlines on a limited number of domestic routes out of Madrid. Carriers and routes include easyJet (Oviedo, Fuerteventura, Ibiza, La Coruña and Lanzarote), Ryanair (Barcelona and Santander), Air Berlin (Palma de Mallorca) and Vueling (Barcelona, Canary Islands, Menorca, Santiago de Compostela and Jerez).

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motor transport generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the greenhouse gases they are responsible for with contributions to energy-saving projects and other climate-friendly initiatives in the developing world – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

Airlines

Increasingly airlines have abandoned their shopfront offices in Madrid so, in most cases, you'll have to go online, call the following numbers or contact a travel agent. The following are among the more popular airlines.

Aer Lingus (☎ 902 502 737; www.aerlingus.com)

Air Berlin (☎ 902 320 737; www.airberlin.com) German budget airline with flights to Madrid from around 20 cities across Western Europe.

Air Europa (☎ 902 401 501; www.aireuropa.com) Connects Madrid with Budapest, Milan, Prague, Paris, Rome, Warsaw and Venice, as well as destinations in Africa, the Caribbean, South America and dozens of Spanish airports.

Air France (☎ 902 207 090; www.airfrance.com)

Alitalia (☎ 902 100 323; www.alitalia.it)

American Airlines (☎ 902 115 570; www.aa.com) Flies to Madrid from New York and other US cities.

Austrian Airlines (☎ 902 257 000; www.aua.com)

British Airways (☎ 902 111 333; www.britishairways.com)

British Midlands (☎ 902 100 737; www.bmibaby.com) Connects Madrid to Birmingham and Manchester.

Cathay Pacific (☎ 91 296 04 16; www.cathaypacific.com) Flies Hong Kong–Madrid with connections throughout Asia.

Continental Airlines (☎ 900 961 266; www.continental.com) Daily flights to New York with connections to other US cities.

EasyJet (☎ 807 260 026; www.easyjet.com) Flies to Madrid from 18 European cities.

German Wings (☎ 91 625 97 04; www.germanwings.com) Flies to Madrid from Stuttgart.

Iberia (☎ 902 400 500; www.iberia.es)

KLM (☎ 902 222 747; www.klm.com)

Lufthansa (☎ 902 883 882; www.lufthansa.com)

Malev Hungarian Airlines (☎ 902 101 445; www.malev.hu)

MyAir.com (www.myair.com) Italian low-cost airline flying to Madrid from Bari and Milan.

Qatar Airways (☎ 902 627 070; www.qatarairways.com) Madrid–Doha and connections across the Middle East.

Royal Air Maroc (☎ 902 210 010; www.royalairmaroc.com)

Ryanair (☎ 807 220 032; www.ryanair.com) Flies to Madrid from 15 European airports.

Scandinavian SAS (☎ 802 112 117; www.flysas.es)

Spanair (☎ 902 131 415; www.spanair.com) Flights from dozens of destinations throughout Spain and Europe, as well as the US, Africa and Bangkok.

Swiss International Airlines (☎ 901 116 712; www.swiss.com)

TAP Air Portugal (☎ 901 116 718; www.flytap.com)

Thai Airways (☎ 91 782 05 21; www.thaiairways.com) Madrid–Bangkok with connections in Asia.

Transavia (☎ 902 010 105; www.transavia.com) Low-cost flights from Amsterdam to Madrid.

Turkish Airlines (☎ 902 111 235; www.turkishairlines.com)

Vueling (☎ 902 333 933; www.vueling.com) Spanish low-cost company with flights between Madrid and Amsterdam, Brussels, Lisbon, Valetta, Milan, Naples, Paris and Venice.

Airport

Madrid's **Barajas airport** (☎ 902 404 704; www.aena.es) lies 12km northeast of the city and every year more than 52 million passengers pass through here (double the number for 1998).

The airport's architecturally stunning Terminal 4 (T4) deals mainly with flights of Iberia and its partners (eg British Airways, American Airlines and Aer Lingus), while other intercontinental or non-Schengen European flights leave from T1. Spanair and Air Europa operate from both T1 and T2, depending on the destination. Air Berlin, Alitalia, Austrian Airlines, SAS and TAP Air Portugal also operate from T2. At the time of research only the tiny Lagun Air was operating out of T3. Iberia's Puente Aereo (air shuttle) between Madrid and Barcelona, which operates like a bus service with no advance booking necessary, operates from T4, while Spanair's equivalent

INTERNET AIR FARES

Most airlines, especially budget ones, encourage you to book on their websites. Other useful general sites to search for competitive fares include the following:

- www.atrapalo.com (in Spanish)
- www.cheaptickets.com
- www.despegar.com (in Spanish)
- www.ebookers.com
- www.experia.com
- www.lowestfare.com
- www.opodo.com
- www.orbitz.com
- www.planesimple.co.uk
- www.rumbo.es (in Spanish)
- www.sta.com
- www.travel.com.au
- www.travelocity.com

GETTING INTO TOWN

Metro

The easiest way into town from the airport is line 8 of the metro (www.metromadrid.es, in Spanish; entrances in T2 and T4) to the Nuevos Ministerios transport interchange, which connects with lines 10 and 6 and the local overground *cercanías* (local trains serving suburbs and nearby towns). It operates from 6.05am to 2am. A single ticket costs €1 (10-ride Metrobús ticket €6.70); there's a €1 supplement if you're travelling from T4, including for those with a 10-ride ticket. The journey to Nuevos Ministerios takes around 15 minutes, around 25 minutes from T4.

Bus & Minibus

Alternatively from T1, T2 and T3 take bus 200 to/from the Intercambiador de Avenida de América (transport interchange on Avenida de América; [Map p123](#)). From T4 take bus 201, going to T4 take bus 204. The same ticket prices apply as for the metro. The first departures are at 5.20am. The last scheduled service from the airport is 11.30pm; buses leave every 12 to 15 minutes. There's also a free bus service connecting all four terminals.

AeroCITY (☎ 91 747 75 70; www.aerocity.com; Calle de Marzo 34) is a private minibus service that takes you door-to-door between central Madrid and the airport. Depending on the number of passengers (maximum of seven), the fare ranges from €5 to €17 per person. It operates 24 hours and you can book by phone or online.

Taxi

A taxi to the city centre will cost you around €25 in total (up to €35 from T4), depending on traffic and where you're going; in addition to what the meter says, you pay a €5.25 supplement. There are taxi ranks outside all four terminals.

service leaves from T3. For a full list of which airlines operate from which terminals visit [www.esmadrid.com](#).

Although all airlines conduct check-in (*facturación*) at the airport's departure areas, some also allow check-in at the Nuevos Ministerios metro stop and transport interchange in Madrid itself – ask your airline. The service allows you to check your luggage in early, take the metro to the airport unburdened and avoid queues at the airport itself.

The **T1 tourist office** (☎ 91 305 86 56; ☎ 8am–8pm Mon–Sat, 9am–2pm Sun) is on the ground floor in the T1 area, while the **T4 tourist office** (☎ 902 100 007; ☎ 8am–8pm Mon–Sat, 9am–2pm Sun) is in the arrivals hall – both are run by the Comunidad de Madrid regional government. The Ayuntamiento (town hall) also runs an **information booth** (☎ 9.30am–8.30pm) in T4. There are ATMs and exchange booths in all terminals, and **post offices** (☎ T1 8.30am–8.30pm Mon–Fri, 9.30am–1pm Sat, T4 8.30am–2.30pm Mon–Fri) in the arrivals lounges of T1 and T4. International car-rental companies have desks in the arrivals area of T1, T2 and T4.

There are three **consignas** (left-luggage offices; ☎ 24hr): one in T1 (near the bus stop and taxi stand); in T2 (near the metro entrance); and on the ground floor of T4. In either, you pay €3.60 for the first 24-hour period (or fraction thereof). Thereafter, it costs €4.64/4.13/3.61 per day in a big/medium/small locker. After

15 days the bag will be moved into storage (€1.85 plus a €37.08 transfer fee). For lost property in the airport, call ☎ 91 393 61 19 (T1) or ☎ 91 746 60 65 (T4).

Parking is available outside T1, T2 and T4. Rates are €1.95 per hour, up to €17.45 for 24 hours. Further away from the terminals and linked by a free shuttle bus is the **Parking de Largas Estancias** (Long-term Carpark; [www.largaestancias.com](#); 1/2/5/10 days €10.20/20.40/48/74) if you plan to leave a vehicle for several days.

BICYCLE

Lots of people zip around town on *motos* (mopeds), but little has been done to encourage cyclists in Madrid and bike lanes are almost as rare as drivers who keep an eye out for cyclists.

You can transport your bicycle on the metro from 10am to 12.30pm and after 9pm Mondays to Fridays and all day on weekends and holidays. You can also take your bike aboard *cercanías* (local trains serving big cities, suburbs and nearby towns) from 10am onwards Monday to Friday and all day on weekends.

Bike Spain ([p273](#)) organises cycling tours of Madrid. It should also be your first stop for practical information and finding bike-friendly accommodation. The tourist office's Descubre Madrid ([p273](#)) programme of tours also includes cycling excursions.

Hire

There are plenty of places that hire bicycles. Recommended places:

Bike Spain (Map pp64–5; ☎ 91 559 06 53 www.bikespain.info; Plaza de la Villa 1, Calle del Codo; per half/full day €10/15, Sat & Sun €25)

Karacol Sports (Map pp126–7; ☎ 91 539 96 33; www.karacol.es, in Spanish; Calle de Tortosa 8; per day €20; ☎ 10.30am–3pm & 5–8pm Mon–Wed & Fri, 10.30am–3pm & 5–9.30pm Thu, 10.30am–2pm Sat; 📍 Atocha Renfe) Road bikes and mountain bikes. There's a refundable deposit of €50 and you need to leave an original document (passport, driving licence etc).

Trixi.com (Map pp64–5; ☎ 91 523 15 47; www.trixi.com; Calle de los Jardines 12; per 4/8/24 hr €8/12/15, helmet €2.50; ☎ 10am–2pm & 4–8pm Mon–Fri, 10am–8pm Sat & Sun Mar–Oct, 10am–3pm daily Nov, Dec & Feb; 📍 Gran Vía)

Urban Movil (Map pp64–5; Calle Mayor 78; per hr/half/full day €4.50/14/19)

BUS

Long Distance

Estación Sur de Autobuses (☎ 91 468 42 00; www.estaciondeautobuses.com, in Spanish; Calle de Méndez Álvaro 83; 📍 Méndez Álvaro), just south of the M-30 ring road, is the city's principal bus station. It serves most destinations to the south and many in other parts of the country. Most bus companies have a ticket office here, even if their buses depart from elsewhere.

The station operates a **consigna** (left-luggage office; ☎ 6.30am–midnight) near where the buses exit the station. There are cafés, shops, exchange booths, a bank and a police post; there's also direct access to metro line 6.

Eurolines (www.eurolines.com), in conjunction with local carriers all over Europe, is the main international carrier connecting Spain to cities across Europe and Morocco from the Estación Sur. For information and tickets contact **Eurolines Peninsular** (☎ 902 405 040; www.eurolines.es). **ALSA Internacional** (☎ 902 422 242; www.alsa.es) is another international operator.

For domestic routes most services operate from the Estación Sur, although some services leave from other terminals around the city, including the **Intercambiador de Autobuses de Moncloa** (Map pp116–17) and the **Intercambiador de Avenida de América** (Map p123). Major companies:

ALSA (Map pp126–7; ☎ 902 422 242; www.alsa.es) A host of services throughout Spain. Most depart from Estación Sur but some buses headed north (including to

Barcelona, Bilbao and Zaragoza) leave from the Intercambiador de Avenida de América.

AutoRes (☎ 902 020 052; www.auto-res.net) Services to Extremadura (eg Cáceres), Castilla y León (eg Salamanca and Zamora) and Valencia via Cuenca, as well as Lisbon, Portugal. All leave from the Estación Sur.

Herranz (Map pp116–17; ☎ 91 890 90 28; Intercambiador de Autobuses de Moncloa; 📍 Moncloa) Buses 661 and 664 to San Lorenzo de El Escorial from platform 30 at the Moncloa train station.

La Sepulvedana (Map pp126–7; ☎ 91 541 32 83, 91 559 89 55; www.lasepulvedana.es, in Spanish; Paseo de la Florida 11; 📍 Príncipe Pío) Buses to Segovia and La Granja de San Ildefonso.

La Veloz (Map pp126–7; ☎ 91 409 76 02; Avenida del Mediterráneo 49; 📍 Conde de Casal) Half-hourly buses (route 337) to Chinchón from 100m west of Plaza del Conde de Casal.

Madrid

Buses operated by **Empresa Municipal de Transportes de Madrid** (EMT; ☎ 902 507 850; www.emtmadrid.es) travel along most city routes regularly between about 6.30am and 11.30pm. Twenty-six night-bus *bitños* (owls) routes operate from midnight to 6am, with all routes originating in Plaza de la Cibeles. Fares for day and night trips are the same: €1 for a single trip, €6.70 for a 10-trip Metrobús ticket.

For details of the Madrid Visión sightseeing buses, see p273.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Madrid is 2622km from Berlin, 2245km from London, 1889km from Milan, 1836km from Paris, 1470km from Geneva, 690km from Barcelona and 610km from Lisbon. The A-1 heads north to Burgos and ultimately to Santander (for the UK ferry), the A-2 wends its way north-east to Barcelona and ultimately into France (as the AP-7), while the A-3 heads down to Valencia. The A-4 takes you south to Andalucía, while the A-5 and A-6 respectively take you west towards Portugal via Cáceres and northwest to Galicia. The A-42 goes south to Toledo.

The city is surrounded by two main ring roads, the outermost M-40 and the inner M-30; there are also two additional partial ring roads, the M-45 and the more-distant M-50. The R-5 and R-3 are two of a series of planned new toll roads built to ease the epic traffic jams as madrileños stream back from holidays and weekend getaways.

Coming from the UK you can put your car on a ferry from Portsmouth to Bilbao with **P&O Ferries** (www.poportsmouth.com) or from Plymouth to Santander with **Brittany Ferries** (www.brittany-ferries.com). From Bilbao or Santander you barrel south to the capital. Otherwise you can opt for a ferry to France or the Channel Tunnel car train, **Eurotunnel** (www.eurotunnel.com).

Vehicles must be roadworthy, registered and insured (third party at least). Also ask your insurer for a European Accident Statement form, which can simplify matters in the event of an accident. A European breakdown-assistance policy (eg AA Five Star Service or RAC Eurocover Motoring Assistance in the UK) is a good investment.

If you're here on a tourist visa, you only need your national driving licence, although it's wise to also carry an International Driving Permit (available from the automobile association in your home country); the same applies to drivers from EU countries regardless of how long you stay.

If you're a resident in Spain and come from a non-EU country, it depends on whether your government has a reciprocal rights agreement with Spain allowing you to drive. Visitors from some countries may need to sit their driving exams again. Check with your embassy.

Driving

The Spanish drive on the right-hand side. The grand roundabouts of the major thoroughfares sometimes require nerves of steel as people turn left from the right-hand lanes or right from the centre. The morning and evening rush hours frequently involve snarling traffic jams that are even possible in the wee hours of the morning, especially on weekends when the whole city seems to be behind the wheel or in a bar. The streets are dead between about 2pm and 4pm, when people are either eating or snoozing.

Hire

The big-name car-hire agencies have offices all over Madrid. Avis, Europcar, Hertz and National/Atesa have booths at the airport. Some also operate branches at Atocha and Chamartín train stations. If prices at the big-gar agencies seem too high, try **Auto Europe** (www.auto-europe.com), which operates as a clearing house for the best deals by the major companies. The rental agencies' most central offices include the following:

Avis (Map pp110–11; ☎ 902 180 854; www.avis.es; Gran Vía 60; 📍 Santo Domingo or Plaza de España)

Europcar (Map pp110–11; ☎ 902 105 055; www.europcar.es; Calle de San Leonardo de Dios 8; 📍 Plaza de España)

Hertz (Map pp110–11; ☎ 902 402 405; www.hertz.es; Edificio de España, Plaza de España 18; 📍 Plaza de España)

Moto Alquiler (Map pp110–11; ☎ 91 542 06 57; motoalquiler@telefonica.net; Calle del Conde Duque 13; ☎ 8.30am–1.30pm & 5–8pm Mon–Fri; 📍 San Bernardo) Motorbike rental. Renting a Honda Sky 50 costs €26/120 per day/week with unlimited kilometres; a week consists of Monday to Friday. It also has Honda Lead 100 (€36/150), Honda CBF250 (€60/250) and Honda CBF500 (€85/335), and it will take a credit card imprint as a deposit. You'll need to bring your passport for identification purposes.

National/Atesa (Map pp110–11; ☎ 902 100 101; www.atesa.es; 1st fl, Gran Vía 80; 📍 Plaza de España)

Pepecar (Map pp116–17; ☎ 807 414 243; www.pepecar.com; underground parking area, Plaza de España; 📍 Plaza de España) Specialises in low-cost rentals. Bookings are best made over the internet.

Parking

Most of Madrid is divided up into clearly marked blue or green street-parking zones. In both areas parking meters apply from 9am to 8pm Monday to Friday and from 9am to 3pm on Saturday; the Saturday hours also apply daily in August. In the green areas you can park for a maximum of one hour (or keep putting money in the metre every hour) for €1.80. In the blue zones you can park for two hours for €2.55. There are also private parking stations all over central Madrid.

You'll see local cars parked in the most unlikely of places, but following their example by parking in a designated no-parking area exposes you to the risk of being towed. Double-parking is similarly common and decidedly risky if you wander far from your vehicle as fines can reach €300. Should your car disappear, call the **Grúa Municipal** (city towing service; ☎ 91 787 72 92). Getting it back costs €138.70 plus whatever fine you've been given.

METRO & CERCANÍAS

Madrid's modern **metro** (☎ 902 444 403; www.metromadrid.es) is a fast, efficient and safe way to navigate Madrid, and generally easier than getting to grips with bus routes. There are 11 colour-coded lines in central Madrid, in addition to the modern southern suburban MetroSur system as well as lines heading east

to the major population centres of Pozuelo and Boadilla del Monte. The metro operates from 6.05am to 2am. In theory most trains are air-conditioned in summer, but that doesn't mean it always works.

Colour maps showing the main central Madrid metro system are available from any metro station; the MetroSur is unlikely to be of interest to visitors.

The metro covers 284km (with 282 stations), making it Europe's second-largest metro system, after London. To give you an idea of its scale and popularity, passengers make around 650 million metro rides in Madrid annually.

The short-range *cercanías* regional trains operated by **Renfe** (☎ 902 240 202; www.renfe.es), the national railway, go as far afield as El Escorial, Alcalá de Henares, Aranjuez and other points in the Comunidad de Madrid. Tickets range between €1.15 and €3.80 depending on how far you're travelling. In Madrid itself they're handy for making a quick, north-south hop between Chamartín and Atocha train stations (with stops at Nuevos Ministerios and in front of the Biblioteca Nacional on Paseo de los Recoletos only). Another line links Chamartín, Atocha and Príncipe Pio stations.

Major infrastructure works are currently underway which, when completed, will connect Atocha train station with Sol, Nuevos Ministerios (for connections to the airport), and Chamartín, making it a whole lot easier when arriving, passing through or leaving Madrid. Like most major works in Madrid, when they finish is anyone's guess.

Tickets

Unless you're only passing through en route to elsewhere, you should buy a Metrobús ticket valid for 10 rides (bus and metro) for €6.70; single-journey tickets cost €1. Tickets can be purchased at stations from manned booths or machines in the metro stations, as well as most *estancos* (tobacconists) and newspaper kiosks. Metrobús tickets are not valid on *cercanías* services.

Monthly or season passes (*abonos*) only make sense if you're staying long term and use local transport frequently. You'll need to get a *carnet* (ID card) from metro stations or tobacconists – take a passport-sized photo and your passport. A monthly ticket for central Madrid (Zona A) costs €42.10.

An **Abono Transporte Turístico** (Tourist Ticket; per 1/2/7 days €4/7.20/20.80) is also possible.

The fine for being caught without a ticket on public transport is €20 – in addition to the price of the ticket, of course.

TAXI

You can pick up a taxi at ranks throughout town or simply flag one down. Flag fall is €1.95 from 6am to 10pm daily, €2.15 from 10pm to 6am Sunday to Friday and €2.95 from 10pm Saturday to 6am Sunday; make sure the driver turns the meter on. You pay €0.92 per kilometre (€1.06 between 10pm and 6am). Several supplementary charges, usually posted inside the taxi, apply; these include €5.25 to/from the airport; €2.75 from taxi ranks at train and bus stations, €2.75 to/from the Parque Ferial Juan Carlos I; and €6.50 on New Year's Eve and Christmas Eve from 10pm to 6am. There's no charge for luggage.

Among the 24-hour taxi services are **Radio-Taxi** (☎ 91 405 55 00, 91 445 90 08, 91 447 51 80) and **Tele-Taxi** (☎ 91 371 21 31, 902 501 130).

Radio-Teléfono Taxi (☎ 91 547 82 00, 91 547 86 00; www.radiotelefono-taxi.com) runs taxis for people with a disability in addition to normal services. Generally if you call any taxi company and ask for a 'eurotaxi' you should be sent one adapted for wheelchair users.

A green light on the roof means the taxi is *libre* (available). Usually a sign to this effect is also placed in the lower passenger side of the windscreen.

Tipping taxi drivers is not common practice, although most travellers round fares up to the nearest euro or two.

TRAIN

Spain's rail network is one of Europe's best, with Madrid well-connected to cities and towns across Spain. A handful of international trains also serves the city.

For information on travelling from the UK contact **Rail Europe** (☎ 08448 484 064; www.raileurope.co.uk).

For travel within Spain, information (including timetables) is available from your nearest train station or travel agent, or from the operator of the rail network, **Renfe** (☎ 902 240 202; www.renfe.es).

There are different types of service, but remember that saving a couple of hours on a faster train can mean a big hike in the fare. Most trains have *preferente* (1st class) and *turista* (2nd class) and have dining cars.

High-speed Tren de Alta Velocidad Española (AVE) services connect Madrid with Seville (via Córdoba), Valladolid (via Segovia), Toledo, Málaga and Barcelona (via Zaragoza). AVE trains can reach speeds of 350km/h.

Train Stations

Two train stations serve the city. Note that many trains call in at either one or the other (but only sometimes both), so check when buying tickets. At **Atocha train station** (Map pp84–5; ☎ Atocha Renfe), south of the city centre, there's an information and ticket centre for long-distance services (including the high-speed AVE) in the station (the part now serving as a tropical garden). In the same area are luggage

lockers available from 6.30am to 10.20pm. Full timetables for long-distance trains are also posted outside the ticket office. Another **information office** (☎ 7am–11pm) near platforms 9 and 10 (look for the 'Atención al Cliente' sign) deals with regional and *cercanías* trains, and property lost on these trains. Tickets for regional trains can be bought at a separate counter.

In **Chamartín train station** (Map p123; ☎ Chamartín) information and tickets are available at the **Centro de Viajes** (☎ 7am–11pm) between platforms 7 and 10. Exchange booths and ATMs are scattered about the station. Lockers are located outside the main station building (take the exit opposite platform 18) and are available between 7am and 11pm.

BUSINESS HOURS

Standard working hours are Monday to Friday from 8am or 9am to 2pm and then again from 3pm or 4pm for another three hours.

Banks open from 8.30am to 2pm Monday to Friday; some branches also open 4pm to 7pm on Thursday and/or 9am to 1pm on Saturday.

The Central Post Office opens from 8.30am to 9.30pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am to 2pm Saturday; many suburban post offices open from 8.30am to 8.30pm but many smaller ones only open from 8am to 2pm Monday to Friday.

Opening hours for shops are covered on p132, while restaurant times are on p158.

CHILDREN

For madrileños (and Spaniards in general), going out to eat or sipping a beer on a late summer evening at a *terrazza* (open-air café or bar) rarely means leaving kids with minders. Locals take their kids out all the time and don't worry too much about keeping them up late, at least in summer. That, of course, doesn't apply to late-night revelling, when Madrid's army of willing grandparents are called into baby-sitting action.

Madrid has plenty of child-friendly sights and activities. Most churches and museums probably aren't among them, but the Museo de Cera (Wax Museum; p112) usually works for kids old enough to recognise the famous figures.

If your boy's a typical boy, he'll most likely love the Museo del Ferrocarril (p129) and the Museo Naval (p97), the railway and navy museums respectively. A trip to the Estadio Santiago Bernabéu (p122) to see Real Madrid and some of the greatest names in football or to stand on the hallowed turf is also a must for those who love their sport.

Riding to the top of the Faro (p119) or high above Madrid in the Teleférico (p119) can also score points. The Parque del Buen Retiro (p98) has ample space to run around or you can rent a boat; on weekends and holidays you may catch some marionette theatre or see jugglers. Check it out at www.titirilandia.com (in Spanish).

Not especially typical of Madrid, but fun nonetheless, are the amusement parks such as the Parque de Atracciones (p128) or Warner Brothers Movie World (p128), outside the city. For some animal fun, try Faunia (p129) or the Zoo Aquarium de Madrid (p128).

In the hot summer months you'll doubtless be rewarded by squeals of delight if you take the bairns to one of the city's municipal pools (p219). For something a little more exhilarating, try the Parque de Nieve (Ski Park) at Madrid Xanadú (p219) for year-round skiing. Other possibilities for something a little bit different:

Centro Cultural de la Villa (Map pp102–3; ☎ 91 480 03 00; www.esmadrid.com/ccvilla/; Plaza de Colón; 🚗 Colón or Serrano) Occasionally has children's theatre.

Escuela Popular de Musica y Danza (Map pp116–17; ☎ 91 447 56 82; www.populardemusica.com, in Spanish; Calle de Trafalgar 22; 🚗 Bilbao) Classes in music (instruments and appreciation) and dance for kids.

Espacio Flamenco (p269) Beginners and intermediate courses in flamenco dancing for kids; two hours a week costs €50 per month.

Laydown Rest Club (p171) One of Madrid's coolest club-restaurants serves brunch from 12.30pm to 6pm on Saturdays and Sundays, tells a different children's story every week and invites the kids to run around barefoot 'like they do at home'.

La Escalera de Jacob (p209) Children's theatre Saturdays and Sundays at 5.30pm.

Parque Secreto (Map pp116–17; ☎ 91 593 14 80; www.parquesecreto.com, in Spanish; Plaza del Conde del Valle Suchil 3; admission per 30min from €2.50; 🕒 5–9pm Mon–Fri, 11.30am–2pm & 4.30–9pm Sat & Sun) With 800 sq metres of indoor playgrounds (labyrinths, floating castles, pits filled with plastic balls, toboggans etc) for kids from 0 to 11 years, this place will keep them occupied for hours while you rest in the cafeteria.

For great ideas and general advice on travelling with children, grab Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children*, by Maureen Wheeler and Cathy Lanigan.

Baby-sitting

There's no real tradition in Spain of professional baby-sitting services – most Spaniards have *abuelos* (grandparents) or other extended

family at the ready. That said, some midrange and most top-end hotels in Madrid can organise baby-sitting. Or you can try to line something up through www.cangueroencasa.com (in Spanish; *canguero* or 'kangaroo' also means baby-sitter in Spanish), although it's based around baby-sitters advertising their services rather than functioning as a centralised booking service; baby-sitters who speak English and other languages are highlighted.

CLIMATE

For Spaniards who don't live in Madrid, the capital's weather is a source of amusement. It has, they say, a climate of extremes, as summed up by the phrase *nueve meses de invierno y tres de infierno* (nine months of winter and three of hell). To a certain extent they're right: the *meseta* (high inland plateau) where the city is located indeed ensures scorching summers and bitterly cold winters. But Madrid's climate is not without its staunch supporters, among them Hemingway (who described Madrid's climate as the best in Spain) and fashion designer Agatha Ruiz de la Prada (who told us that 'it's a climate that can make you feel quite euphoric'). Personally, we love the absence of humidity, the piercing blue skies for much of winter, and the hot, dry summer days.

July is the hottest month, with August running a close second. Average highs hover above 30°C, but the maximum is frequently in excess of 35°C and sometimes nudges 40°C. When a heat wave sweeps through, it can get uncomfortable and at 4am you can still be gasping for air, but it's rare that the heat gets too oppressive for more than a couple of weeks a year. Air-conditioning in your room is, at such times, a godsend. Bringing some relief, and rare humidity, apocalyptic summer storms sometimes drench Madrid in summer.

The coldest months are January and February, when daily average highs are less than 10°C, although as high as 15°C is not uncom-

mon. At night it frequently drops below freezing, yet it rarely snows in Madrid. Whatever the official temperature, you'll really notice the cold when an icy wind blows in off the snow-capped sierra.

Spring and autumn are lovely times to be in Madrid. In theory, it's also the period with the heaviest rainfall; more than 50mm can be quite common in October, and March can be unpredictable. In Spain they say *cuando en marzo mayea, en mayo marzea*. In other words, if you get nice, warm dry days in March (weather more typical of May), you'll be wiping that grin off your face in May, when the wet spells you missed earlier catch up with you! Never short of a saying, Spaniards say of April, *mes de abril, aguas mil* – it rains a lot in this spring month.

COURSES

Madrid is a good place to base yourself for learning Spanish or flamenco. If you're interested in shorter-term cooking courses, turn to p158, while wine appreciation courses are covered on p185.

Spanish Classes

Madrid is jammed with language schools of all possible categories, as eager to teach foreigners Spanish as locals other languages.

Non-EU citizens who want to study at a university or language school in Spain should, in theory, have a study visa. These visas can be obtained from your nearest Spanish embassy or consulate. You'll normally require confirmation of your enrolment, payment of fees and proof of adequate funds to support yourself before a visa is issued. This type of visa is renewable within Spain but, again, only with confirmation of ongoing enrolment and proof that you're able to support yourself.

Some language schools worth investigating include the following:

Academia Inhispania (Map pp64–5; ☎ 91 521 22 31; www.inhispania.com; Calle de la Montera 10-12; ☑ Sol) Intensive four-week courses start at €510.

Academia Madrid Plus (Map pp64–5; ☎ 91 548 11 16; www.madridplus.es; 6th fl, Calle del Arenal 21; ☑ Ópera) Four-week (30-hour) courses begin at €270.

Acento Español (Map pp64–5; ☎ 91 521 36 76; www.acentoespanol.com; Calle Mayor 4; ☑ Sol) Four-week courses start at €475.

Babylon Idiomas (Map pp84–5; ☎ 91 532 44 80; www.babylon-idiomas.com; Plaza de Santa Ana 1; ☑ Sol,

Sevilla or Antón Martín) Intensive 20-/30-hour per week courses cost €155/235 per week.

International House (Map pp116–17; ☎ 91 319 72 24; www.ihmadrid.es; Calle de Zurbano 8; ☑ Alonso Martínez) Intensive courses start at around €385 for two weeks. Staff can organise accommodation with local families.

Mosaic International Institute (Map p123; ☎ 91 535 74 06; www.mosaicinternationalinstitute.org/EN/; Calle del Comandante Zorita 4; ☑ Cuatro Caminos or Nuevos Ministerios) A range of courses. Intensive classes (20 hours a week) cost €590 a month

Universidad Complutense (Map pp58–9; ☎ 91 394 53 36; www.ucm.es/info/cextran/Index.htm; Secretaría de los Cursos para Extranjeros, Facultad de Filología [Edificio A] Universidad Complutense, Ciudad Universitaria, 28040 Madrid; ☑ Cuidad Universitaria) You can try a range of language and cultural courses throughout the year. An intensive semester course of 150 contact hours costs €445.

Flamenco

There are plenty of places where you can learn to dance *sevillanas* or strum the guitar like the greats.

El Flamenco Vive (Map pp64–5; ☎ 91 547 39 17; www.eflamecove.com; Calle del Conde de Lemos 7; ☎ 10.30am–2pm & 5–9pm Mon–Sat; ☑ Ópera) Guitar lessons for €25 per hour.

Espacio Flamenco (Map pp76–7; ☎ 91 298 19 55; <http://espacio.deflamenco.com/escuelai.html>; Calle de Ribera de Curtidores 26; ☎ 11am–2pm & 5.30–8.30pm Mon–Fri, 11am–2.30pm Sat & Sun; ☑ Puerta de Toledo) Intensive or longer courses in guitar, dancing and singing for €50 to €100 per month.

Fundación Conservatorio Casa Patas (Map pp76–7; ☎ 91 429 84 71; www.conservatorioflamenco.com, in Spanish; Calle de Cañizares 10; ☑ Antón Martín or Tirso de Molina) Every conceivable type of flamenco instruction (€40 to €136 per month, plus around €30 joining fee), including dance, guitar, singing and much more. It's upstairs from the Casa Patas flamenco *tablaó*.

Academia Amor de Dios (Map pp76–7; ☎ 91 360 04 34; www.amordedios.com, in Spanish; 1st fl, Calle de Santa Isabel 5; ☑ Antón Martín) The best-known course for flamenco dancing (and probably the hardest to get into), although it's more for budding professionals than casual visitors.

Other Courses

Cultural centres around Madrid offer courses in just about anything, while a handful of places teach music and dance.

Centro Cultural de Lavapiés (Map pp76–7; ☎ 91 467 30 39; Calle del Olivar 46; ☎ 9am–2pm & 4–9pm Mon–Fri; ☑ Lavapiés) A range of (mostly Spanish-language) courses spanning ceramics, photography, t'ai chi, guitar, reflexology and more.

Escuela Popular de Música y Danza (Map pp116–17; ☎ 91 447 56 82; www.populardemusica.com, in Spanish; Calle de Trafalgar 22; ☑ Bilbao) Classes in music, dance and drama.

Kabokla (p209) Samba and capoeira classes in this fine Brazilian live music venue.

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

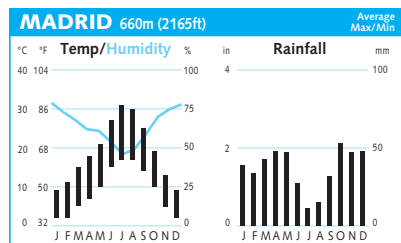
People entering Spain from outside the EU are allowed to bring in duty-free one bottle of spirits, one bottle of wine, 50mL of perfume and 200 cigarettes. There are no duty-free allowances for travel between EU countries. For duty-paid items bought at normal shops in one EU country and taken into another, the allowances are 90L of wine, 10L of spirits, unlimited quantities of perfume and 800 cigarettes. For more information on obtaining VAT refunds, see the boxed text, p135.

DISCOUNT CARDS

The International Student Identity Card (ISIC; see www.isic.org) and the Euro<26 card (www.euro26.org), for youth under 26 years, are available from most national student organisations and can gain you discounted access to sights.

If you intend to do some intensive sightseeing and travelling on public transport, it might be worth looking at the **Madrid Card** (☎ 902 877 996; www.madridcard.com). It includes free entry to more than 40 museums in and around Madrid (including the Museo del Prado, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, the Estadio Santiago Bernabéu and Palacio Real) and free Descubre Madrid (p273) walking tours, as well as discounts on public transport, the Madrid Visión tourist bus, and in certain shops and restaurants. The ticket is available for one/two/three days (€42/55/68). There's also a cheaper version (€28/32/36), which just covers cultural sights.

The Madrid Card can be bought online, over the phone (☎ 91 360 47 72, 902 088 908), or in person at the tourist offices on Plaza Mayor and in Calle del Duque de Medinaceli (see p276), at Fortunata – La Tienda de Madrid (p134), and in some tobacconists and hotels; a list of major sales outlets appears on the website.



ELECTRICITY

The electric current in Madrid is 220V, 50Hz, as in the rest of continental Europe. Several countries outside Europe (such as the USA and Canada) use 110V, 60Hz, which means that it's safest to use a transformer. Plugs have two round pins, as in the rest of continental Europe.

EMBASSIES

Most countries have an embassy or consulate in Madrid. The following contact details were correct at the time of research, although a number of embassies (including Australia, Canada and the UK) have announced plans to move to the new skyscrapers at the northern end of the Paseo de la Castellana when they're completed. Check their websites, or www.esmadrid.com, for the most recent information.

Australia (Map p123; ☎ 91 353 66 00; www.spain.embassy.gov.au; 2nd fl, Plaza del Descubridor Diego de Ordás 3; 🇺🇸 Ríos Rosas)

Canada (Map pp102–3; ☎ 91 423 32 50; www.canada-es.org; Calle de Núñez de Balboa 35; 🇨🇦 Velázquez)

France (Map pp102–3; ☎ 91 423 89 00; www.amba-france-es.org; Calle de Salustiano Olózaga 9; 🇫🇷 Retiro)

Germany (Map pp116–17; ☎ 91 557 90 00; www.madrid.diplo.de; Calle de Fortuny 8; 🇩🇪 Rubén Darío)

Ireland (Map pp102–3; ☎ 91 436 40 93; embajada@irlanda.es; 4th fl, Paseo de la Castellana 46; 🇮🇪 Rubén Darío)

New Zealand (Map p123; ☎ 91 523 02 26; www.nz.embassy.com; 3rd fl, Calle de Pinar 7; 🇳🇿 Gregorio Marañón)

UK consulate-general (Map pp110–11; ☎ 91 524 97 00; Paseo de los Recoletos 7/9; 🇬🇧 Banco de España); embassy (Map pp116–17; ☎ 91 524 97 00; www.ukinSpain.com; Calle de Fernando el Santo 16; 🇬🇧 Colón)

USA (Map pp102–3; ☎ 91 587 22 00; www.embusa.es; Calle de Serrano 75; 🇺🇸 Núñez de Balboa)

EMERGENCY

For practical information on keeping your wits about you in Madrid, see p274. To report thefts or other crime-related matters, your best bet is the **Servicio de Atención al Turista Extranjero** (Foreign Tourist Assistance Service; Map pp64–5; ☎ 91 548 85 37, 91 548 80 08; sat Madrid@municipal.es; Calle de Leganitos 19; 🕒 9am–10pm; 🇺🇸 Plaza de España or Santo Domingo), which is housed in the central police station or *comisaría* of the National Police. Here you'll find specially trained officers working alongside representatives from

the tourism ministry. They can also assist in cancelling credit cards, as well as contacting your embassy or your family.

Ambulance (☎ 061)

EU standard emergency number (☎ 112)

Fire brigade (Bomberos; ☎ 080)

Local police (Policía Municipal; ☎ 092)

Military police (Guardia Civil; ☎ 062)

National police (Policía Nacional; ☎ 091)

Teléfono de la víctima (Hotline for victims of racial or sexual violence; ☎ 902 180 995)

HOLIDAYS

When a holiday falls close to a weekend, madrileños like to make a *puente* (bridge) and take the intervening day off. On the odd occasion when a couple of holidays fall close, they make an *acueducto* (aqueduct)! For madrileños the main holiday periods are during summer (July and especially August), Christmas–New Year and Easter. August can be a peculiar time as locals make their annual migration to the beach and the city they leave behind falls quiet and grinds to a halt – this is a bad time to be trying to do business, although the change is less pronounced than it used to be.

For more information on the city's colourful festivals and other events, turn to p16.

Public Holidays

Madrid's 14 public holidays are as follows:

Año Nuevo (New Year's Day) 1 January – see p16.

Reyes (Epiphany or Three Kings' Day) 6 January – see p16.

Jueves Santo (Holy Thursday) March/April – see p16.

Viernes Santo (Good Friday) March/April – see p16.

Labour Day (Fiesta del Trabajo) 1 May.

Fiesta de la Comunidad de Madrid 2 May – see p16.

Fiestas de San Isidro Labrador 15 May – see p16.

La Asunción (Feast of the Assumption) 15 August.

Día de la Hispanidad (Spanish National Day) 12 October – a fairly sober occasion with a military parade along the Paseo de la Castellana.

Todos los Santos (All Saints' Day) 1 November.

Día de la Virgen de la Almudena 9 November – see p16.

Día de la Constitución (Constitution Day) 6 December.

La Inmaculada Concepción (Feast of the Immaculate Conception) 8 December.

Navidad (Christmas) 25 December – see p16.

INTERNET ACCESS

If you're toting a laptop, almost all midrange and top-end hotels have either wi-fi or cable ADSL in-room connections; even some of the better hotels can run out of cables for the latter so ask for one as soon as you arrive. For everyone else, there are plenty of internet cafés around town.

Internet Cafés

Madrid is full of internet cafés. Some offer student rates, while most have deals on cards for several hours' use at much-reduced rates. In addition to the following handful of options, the Ayuntamiento's Centro de Turismo de Madrid (p276) on the Plaza Mayor offers free internet for up to 15 minutes.

BBiGG (Map pp64–5; ☎ 91 531 23 64; Calle Mayor 1; per 1/5 hr €2.50/3; 🕒 9.30am–midnight; 🇺🇸 Sol) A massive internet centre in the heart of town, with separate sections for Skype, internet and games.

Café Comercial (Map pp110–11; ☎ 91 521 56 55; Glorieta de Bilbao 7; per 50 mins €1; 🕒 7.30am–midnight Mon, 7.30am–1am Tue–Thu, 7.30am–2am Fri, 8.30am–2am Sat, 9am–midnight Sun; 🇺🇸 Bilbao) Surf the net in one of Madrid's grandest old cafés (p193).

Drop & Drag (Map pp110–11; ☎ 91 532 93 72; Calle de Augusto Figueroa 7; per hr €2; 🕒 noon–1am Mon–Fri, 3pm–midnight Sat & Sun; 🇺🇸 Chueca) Handy if you're in Chueca.

La Bolsa de Minutos (Map pp84–5; ☎ 91 532 26 22; Calle de Espoz y Mina 17; per hr €2; 🕒 9.30am–midnight daily; 🇺🇸 Sol or Antón Martín)

MAPS

The maps in this book should be more than enough for most travellers. Long-termers seeking comprehensive map books and atlases

WI-FI ACCESS

There's an ever expanding network of wi-fi hotspots around town if you can't wait to get back to your hotel to get online. The most obvious places are the airport and some cafés, although free wi-fi hotspots are still pretty thin on the ground; exceptions include the Plaza de Colón (Map pp102–3) and *Isolée* (p151). **Chueca Wifi** (www.chuecawifi.com) is a barrio initiative aimed at transforming Chueca into one big wi-fi hotspot and dozens of businesses have signed up; check out its website for more details. Otherwise, check out www.totalhotspots.com/directory/es for a list of businesses offering wi-fi access. We've also heard of plans to make Plaza Mayor a hotspot, but they're still only plans.

If you're going to be in town a little longer, monthly subscriptions and prepaid accounts are possible through **Tel-e-fonica** (www.telefonica.es), as well as private operators such as **Ya.com** (www.ya.com, in Spanish), **Orange** (www.orange.es, in Spanish) and **Jazztel** (www.jazztel.com, in Spanish). **Vodafone** (www.vodafone.es, in Spanish) also offers wireless internet connection that works throughout Spain via a USB modem (€19 to €39 per month) that plugs into your laptop. It's ideal if you'll be travelling around while in Spain.

are spoiled for choice. A good one is *Almax's Callejero de Madrid*, scaled at 1:12,000. The same publisher produces *Atlas de Madrid*, which covers Madrid and the surrounding municipalities. You could also try the super-detailed *Guía Urbana*. Michelin's *Madrid* (No 42) map is also excellent and far less cumbersome to carry around.

For something far less detailed, any of the tourist offices have maps of central Madrid. Alternatively, head to the Paseo del Prado at the northern end towards the Plaza de la Cibeles where, at the large standing maps that look like advertising posts, you can insert €1.20 and receive a reasonable city map.

If you're looking for a specific address, check out www.qdq.com and click on *Callejeros Fotográficos*, type in the street name and number and you'll get a photo of the building you're looking for and its map location.

MEDICAL SERVICES

All foreigners have the same right as Spaniards to emergency medical treatment in a public hospital. European Union (EU) citizens are entitled to the full range of health-care services in public hospitals free of charge, but you'll need to present your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC); inquire at your national health service before leaving home. Even if you have no insurance, you'll be treated in an emergency, with costs in the public system ranging from free to €112. Non-EU citizens have to pay for anything other than emergency treatment – a good reason to have a travel insurance policy.

Your embassy should be able to refer you to doctors who speak your language. If you have a specific health complaint, obtain the necessary information and referrals for treatment before leaving home.

Some useful numbers and addresses for travellers:

Anglo-American Medical Unit (Unidad Medica; [Map pp102–3](#); ☎ 91 435 18 23; www.unidadmedica.com; Calle del Conde de Aranda 1; ☎ 9am–8pm Mon–Fri, emergencies 10am–1pm Sat; 🚗 Retiro) A private clinic with a wide range of specialisations and where all doctors speak Spanish and English. Each consultation costs around €120.

Hospital General Gregorio Marañón ([Map pp126–7](#); ☎ 91 586 80 00; www.hggm.es; in Spanish; Calle del Doctor Esquerdo 46; 🚗 Sainz de Baranda) One of the city's main hospitals.

Pharmacies

For minor health problems, you can try your local *farmacia* (pharmacy), where pharmaceuticals tend to be sold more freely without prescription than in other countries, such as the USA, Australia or the UK.

At least one pharmacy is open 24 hours per day in each district of Madrid. They mostly operate on a rota and details appear daily in *El País* and other papers. Otherwise call ☎ 010. Most pharmacies have a list in their window indicating the location of nearby after-hours pharmacies. Pharmacies that always remain open include the following:

Farmacia del Globo ([Map pp76–7](#); ☎ 91 369 20 00; Calle de Atocha 46; 🚗 Antón Martín)

Farmacia Velázquez 70 ([Map pp102–3](#); ☎ 91 575 60 28; Calle de Velázquez 70; 🚗 Velázquez)

Farmacia Real Botica de la Reina Madre ([Map pp64–5](#); ☎ 91 548 00 14; Calle Mayor 59; 🚗 Ópera)

MONEY

As in most other EU nations, Spain uses the euro, which replaced the peseta in 2002. Although it's becoming rarer, you occasionally see prices listed in pesetas alongside the euro price; this is especially common with house prices.

Changing Money

You can change cash or travellers cheques in currencies of the developed world without problems at virtually any bank or bureau de change (usually indicated by the word *cambio*). Central Madrid also abounds with banks – most have ATMs.

Exchange offices are open for longer hours than banks but generally offer poorer rates. Also, keep a sharp eye open for commissions at bureaux de change.

Credit Cards

Major cards, such as Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, Cirrus and, to a lesser extent, Amex, are accepted throughout Spain. They can be used in many hotels, restaurants and shops; in doing so you'll need to show some form of photo ID (eg passport). Credit cards can also be used in ATMs displaying the appropriate sign (if there's no sign, don't risk it), or, if you have no PIN, you can obtain cash advances over the counter in many banks. Check charges with your bank.

If your card is lost, stolen or swallowed by an ATM, you can call the following numbers toll-free to have an immediate stop put on its use:

Amex (☎ 902 375 637)

Diners Club (☎ 91 211 43 00, 902 40 11 12)

MasterCard (☎ 900 971 231)

Visa (☎ 902 192 100)

Travellers Cheques

Does anyone still use travellers cheques? If you do, most banks and exchange offices will cash travellers cheques; get most of your cheques in fairly large denominations to save on per-cheque commission charges. It's vital to keep your initial receipt and a record of your cheque numbers and the ones you have used, separate from the cheques themselves. It can also be a good idea to keep handy the number for reporting lost or stolen cheques, even though, best case scenario, you won't need to use it.

NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES

There's a wide selection of national newspapers from around Europe (including most of the UK dailies) available at newspaper stands all over central Madrid. The *International Herald Tribune* (IHT), *Time*, the *Economist*, *Der Spiegel* and a host of other international magazines are also available. The IHT includes an eight-page supplement of articles from *El País* translated into English.

Madrid has an outstanding new bilingual magazine *Madrid* (www.madridz.com; €3) that covers all the latest trends and quirks of the city and also has some great feature articles. The free English-language monthly *InMadrid* is a handy newspaper-format publication with articles on the local scene and classifieds. Pick it up in some bars and pubs, language schools, consulates and some tourist offices.

Spanish Press

The main Spanish dailies are divided roughly along political lines, with the old-fashioned ABC (www.abc.es, in Spanish) representing the conservative right, *El País* (www.elpais.com) identified with the centre-left and *El Mundo* (www.elmundo.es, in Spanish) with the centre-right. Further to the right than all others is *La Razón* (www.larazon.es, in Spanish), while *El Público* (www.publico.es, in Spanish) is associated with the left. For a good spread of national and international news, *El País* is the pick of the bunch and also the largest-selling of the news dailies. It also contains an informative central section devoted to the goings-on in the Comunidad de Madrid. But the best-selling daily of all is *Marca* (www.marca.com, in Spanish), which is devoted exclusively to sport. Free morning dailies that you're likely to find outside metro stations and busy intersections in the morning are *ADN*, *20 Minutos*, *Metro* (which has one English-language page devoted to international celebrity gossip) and the sensationalist *Que!* Of the magazines devoted to Spanish politics, *Tiempo* (www.tiempodehoy.com) is probably the pick.

ORGANISED TOURS

For organised culinary or tapas tours around Madrid, turn to p162. Otherwise, the following offer tours around the city and some outlying sights.

Bike Spain ([Map pp64–5](#); ☎ 91 559 06 53 www.bikespain.info; Plaza de la Villa 1, Calle del Codo; tours €30; ☎ 10am–2pm & 4–7pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat & Sun; 🚗 Ópera) English-language guided city tours by bicycle, by day or (on Friday) by night, plus longer expeditions to San Lorenzo de El Escorial (€75).

Descubre Madrid (Discover Madrid; ☎ 91 588 29 06; www.esmadrid.com/monograficos/DescubreMadridv2/es/index.html; walking tours adult/child, student, under 25yr or senior €3.30/2.70, bus tours €6.45/5.05, bicycle tours €3.30/2.70 plus €6 bike rental) Conducts tours in both Spanish and English. Nineteen highly recommended guided tours. Organised by the **Centro de Turismo de Madrid** (Tourist Office; [Map pp64–5](#); Plaza Mayor 27).

Letango Tours ([Map pp76–7](#); ☎ 91 369 47 52; www.letango.com; 1st fl, Plaza de Tirso de Molina 12; weekday/weekend €98/138; 🚗 Tirso de Molina) Walking tours through Madrid with additional excursions to San Lorenzo El Escorial, Segovia and Toledo.

Madrid Bike Tours (☎ 680 581 782; www.madridbike.tours.com; 4hr tour & picnic lunch per person €65) Londoner Mike Chandler offers a guided two-wheel tour of Madrid as well as tours further afield.

Madrid en Bicicleta (☎ 91 559 06 53; www.mtb-spain.com; day tour per person €18–25) Mountain bike tours in the mountains surrounding Madrid. It also runs the two-day Guadarrama Extreme (€265). Bookings can be made through Bike Spain (see above).

Madrid Original (☎ 91 521 04 49; www.madridoriginal.com; per hr per group Mon–Fri €65, Sat/Sun €95/125) Privately run tours (for up to 6 people) in English, Spanish or French by professional guides. Tours include the major museums, historical eras, Gran Vía, the Parque del Buen Retiro and tailor-made itineraries.

Madrid Visión (☎ 91 779 18 88, 91 765 10 16; www.madridvision.es; adult 1–2-day ticket €16/20.50, child 7–16yr & senior over 65yr 1–2-day ticket €8.50/11, child under 7yr free; ☎ 9.30am–midnight 21 Jun–20 Sep, 10am–5pm 21 Dec–20 Mar, 10am–6.30pm rest of year) Hop-on, hop-off open-topped buses that run every 10 to 20 minutes along two routes: Historical Madrid and Modern Madrid. Information, including maps, is available at tourist offices, most travel agencies and some hotels, and you can get tickets on the bus.

Pullmantur ([Map pp64–5](#); ☎ 91 541 18 07; www.pullmantur-spain.com; Plaza de Oriente 8; 🚗 Ópera) One of several private companies offering tours of Madrid and excursions beyond, including to San Lorenzo de El Escorial and the Valle de los Caídos, Toledo, Segovia and Ávila.

The Wellington Society (☎ 609 143 203; www.wellsoc.org; tours €50–85) A handful of quirky historical tours laced with anecdotes and led by the inimitable Stephen Drake-Jones. Possibilities include Bullfights, Hemingway's Madrid, Curiosities & Anecdotes of Old Madrid.

Urban Movil ([Map pp64–5](#); ☎ 91 542 77 71, 687 535 443; www.urbanmovil.com; Calle Mayor 78; 1–2-hr Segway tours €35/60; ☎ 10am–8pm) Segway tours around Madrid. Prices include 10-minutes worth of training before you set out and it also organises bike tours.

POST

Correos (☎ 902 197 197; www.correos.es), the national postal service, has its **main office** ([Map pp92–3](#); ☎ 91 396 27 33; Plaza de la Cibeles; ☎ 8.30am–9.30pm Mon–Fri, 8.30am–2pm Sat; 🚗 Banco de España) in the ornate Palacio de Comunicaciones.

Sellos (stamps) are sold at most *estancos* (tobacconists' shops with *Tabacos* in yellow letters on a maroon background), as well as post offices.

A postcard or letter weighing up to 20g costs €1.07 from Spain to other European

countries, and €1.38 to the rest of the world. For a full list of prices for certified (*certificado*) and express post (*urgente*), go to www.correos.es (in Spanish).

All Spanish addresses have five-digit postcodes; using postcodes will help your mail arrive quicker.

Lista de correos (poste restante) mail can be addressed to you anywhere that has a post office. It will be delivered to the main post office unless another is specified in the address. Take your passport when you pick up mail. A typical *lista de correos* address looks like this:

Your name
Lista de Correos
28014 Madrid
Spain

Delivery times are erratic but ordinary mail to other Western European countries can take up to a week; to North America up to 10 days; and to Australia or New Zealand anywhere between one and two weeks.

RADIO

The Spanish national network Radio Nacional de España (RNE) can be heard on RNE 1 (88.2 FM in Madrid) and has general interest and current affairs programmes. Spaniards also divide between those who listen to the left-leaning Cadena SER (105.4 FM or 810AM) and the conservative, right-wing COPE network (100.7 FM). Among the most listened-to music stations are 40 Principales (97.7 FM), Onda Cero (98 FM) and Kiss FM (102.7 FM).

You can pick up **BBC World Service** (www.bbc.co.uk/radio/) on, among others, 6195, 9410 and 15,485 kHz (short wave). Voice of America (VOA) can be found on a host of short-wave frequencies, including 6040, 9760 and 15,205 kHz.

RELOCATING

If you're moving to Madrid and looking for somewhere to live, try **Room Madrid** (Map pp110-11; ☎ 676 977 557; www.roommadrid.es; Calle de Conde Duque 7; ☎ 11am-2pm & 5-8pm Mon-Fri; 📍 Plaza de España), a booking service that arranges medium- to long-term accommodation. Within its portfolio is everything from apartments to shared flats. Though it can be a bit slow to answer (make contact well in advance of arriving in Madrid), it's generally reliable. Several real

estate and relocation companies specialise in helping foreign clients; try **Solucion Relocation Services** (☎ 91 550 03 97; www.solucionmad.com) or **Immo Madrid** (☎ 91 766 06 61; www.immomadrid.com). Once you're living here, pick up a copy of *The Notebook Madrid – Settling & Living in Madrid*, a locally produced publication (€20) with loads of useful tips and contacts; in English and French, it can usually be found at Petra's International Bookshop (p132). Other good resources include www.expatica.com and **European Vibe** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 91 549 77 11; www.europeanvibe.com; Calle de Fernando El Católico 63; 📍 Moncloa), whose aim is to plug you into the local expat scene.

SAFETY

Madrid is a generally safe city, although you should, as in most European cities, be wary of pickpockets in the city centre, on the metro and around major tourist sights. Although you should be careful, don't be paranoid; remember that the overwhelming majority of travellers to Madrid rarely encounters any problems.

You need to be especially careful in the most heavily toured parts of town, notably the Plaza Mayor and surrounding streets, the Puerta del Sol, El Rastro and the Museo del Prado. Tricks abound. They usually involve a team of two or more (sometimes one of them an attractive woman to distract male victims). While one attracts your attention, the other empties your pockets. Be wary of jostling on crowded buses and the metro and, as a general rule, dark, empty streets are to be avoided; luckily, Madrid's most lively nocturnal areas are generally busy with crowds having a good time.

More unsettling than dangerous, the central Madrid street of Calle de la Montera has long been the haunt of prostitutes, pimps and a fair share of shady characters, although the street has recently been pedestrianised, installed with CCTV cameras and a police station. The same applies to the Casa de Campo, although it, too, has been cleaned up a little. The Madrid barrio of Lavapiés is a gritty, multicultural melting pot. We love it, but it's not without its problems, with drug-related crime an occasional but persistent problem; it's probably best avoided if you're on your own at night.

Where possible, only keep strictly necessary things on your person. Never put anything in your back pocket; small day bags are

best worn across your chest. Money belts or pouches worn *under* your clothing are also a good idea. The less you have in your pockets or exposed bags the less you stand to lose if you're done. As with any travel, you should always keep a photocopy of important documents separate from the originals and travel insurance against theft and loss is also highly recommended.

For information on who to contact should you find yourself in difficulties, turn to p270. The numbers for reporting lost or stolen credit cards are on p272.

TELEPHONE

To call Spain, dial the international access code (00 in most countries), followed by the code for Spain (34) and the full nine-digit number. The access code for international calls from Spain is 00. International reverse-charge (collect) calls (*una llamada a cobro revertido*) are simple:

Australia (☎ 900 99 00 61)

Canada (☎ 900 99 00 15)

France (☎ 900 99 00 33)

Germany (☎ 900 99 00 49)

Ireland (☎ 900 99 03 53)

New Zealand (☎ 900 99 00 64)

UK (BT ☎ 900 99 00 44, Mercury 900 99 09 44)

USA (AT&T ☎ 900 99 00 11, Sprint and various others 900 99 00 13, MCI 900 99 00 14)

You'll get straight through to an operator in the country you're calling. There are changes afoot, so try an '800' prefix to the above numbers instead of '900' if the latter doesn't work.

If for some reason the above information doesn't work for you, in most places you can get an English-speaking Spanish international operator on ☎ 1008 (for calls within Europe or for Morocco) or ☎ 1005 (for the rest of the world).

For international directory inquiries dial ☎ 11825. Be warned, a call to this number costs €2! Dial ☎ 1009 to speak to a domestic operator, including for a domestic reverse-charge (collect) call. For national directory inquiries dial ☎ 11818.

Mobile (cell) phone numbers start with 6. Numbers starting with 900 are national toll-free numbers, while those starting 901 to 905 come with varying conditions. A common

one is 902, which is a national standard rate number, but which can only be dialled from within Spain. In a similar category are numbers starting with 800, 803, 806 and 807.

Mobile Phones

You can buy SIM cards and prepaid time in Spain for your mobile (cell) phone (provided you own a GSM, dual- or tri-band cellular phone). This only works if your national phone hasn't been code-blocked; check before leaving home. Only consider a full contract unless you plan to live in Spain for a while.

All the Spanish mobile phone companies (Telefónica's Movistar, Orange, Vodafone and Amena) offer *prepagado* (prepaid) accounts for mobiles. The SIM card costs from €50, which includes some prepaid phone time. Phone outlets are scattered across the city. You can then top up in their shops or by buying cards in outlets, such as tobacconists (*estancos*) and newsstands.

You can rent a mobile phone through the Madrid-based **OnSpanishTime.com** (www.onspanishtime.com/web). Delivery and pickup are done personally at a cost of US\$12 (US\$15 on weekends and holidays). The basic service costs US\$8/49/100 per day/week/month for the phone. You pay a US\$150 deposit and the whole operation is done over the internet.

Phonecards

The ubiquitous blue payphones are easy to use for international and domestic calls. They accept coins, *tarjetas telefónicas* (phonecards) issued by the national phone company Telefónica and, in some cases, credit cards. Phones in hotel rooms are more expensive than street payphones. The Telefónica phonecards are best for domestic calls.

For international calls you have two cut-price options. Most internet cafés recommended in this book (see p271) are Skype enabled, allowing you to call (with your Skype user id and password) for no more than the cost of your internet time. The other option is an international phonecard, which can be bought from *estancos*, some small convenience stores and newsstands in central Madrid. Most outlets display the call rates for each card. For calls to Australia or Western Europe, Euro Hours has a phonecard costing €6, for 600 minutes of call time (plus the cost of the local call) or more than 200 minutes calling a toll-free local number.

TIME

Like most of Western Europe, Spain (and hence Madrid) is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time/Coordinated Universal Time (GMT/UTC) during winter, two hours during the daylight-saving period from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October. Spaniards use the 24-hour clock for official business (timetables etc), but often in daily conversation switch to the 12-hour version.

TOILETS

Public toilets are almost nonexistent in Madrid and it's not really the done thing to go into a bar or café solely to use the toilet; ordering a quick coffee is a small price to pay for relieving the problem. Otherwise you can usually get away with it in a larger, crowded place where they can't really keep track of who's coming and going. Another option is the department stores of El Corte Inglés (p133) that are dotted around the city.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Ayuntamiento de Madrid

Madrid finally has a tourist office worthy of the city at the Ayuntamiento's **Centro de Turismo de Madrid** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 91 588 16 36; www.esmadrid.com; Plaza Mayor 27; ☎ 9.30am–8.30pm; ☀ Sol). Housed in the delightful Real Casa de Panadería on the north side of the Plaza Mayor, it allows free access to its outstanding website and city database, and offers free downloads of the metro map to your mobile; staff are helpful. It also runs a useful general information line (☎ 010; Spanish only) dealing with anything from transport to shows in Madrid (call ☎ 91 540 40 10 from outside Madrid). There's another **tourist office** (Map pp102–3; Plaza de Colón; ☎ 9.30am–8.30pm; ☀ Colón), which is accessible via the underground passage on the corner of Calle de Goya and the Paseo de la Castellana, while smaller, bright orange tourist information points can be found at the following:

Plaza de Cibeles (Map pp92–3; ☎ 9.30am–8.30pm; ☀ Banco de España)

Plaza del Callao (Map pp64–5; ☎ 9.30am–8.30pm; ☀ Callao)

Paseo del Arte (Map pp84–5; cnr Calle de Santa Isabel & Plaza del Emperador Carlos V; ☎ 9.30am–8.30pm; ☀ Atocha)

Barajas Airport, T4 (☎ 9.30am–8.30pm; ☀ Aeropuerto T4)

Comunidad de Madrid

The regional Comunidad de Madrid government runs the helpful **Comunidad de Madrid Tourist Office** (Map pp84–5; ☎ 902 100 007, 91 429 49 51; www.turismomadrid.es; Calle del Duque de Medinaceli 2; ☎ 8am–8pm Mon–Sat, 9am–2pm Sun; ☀ Banco de España) covering the city and surrounding region. It also has a telephone information service (☎ 012) and branches at the following places:

Atocha train station (☎ 91 528 46 30; ☎ 8am–8pm Mon–Sat, 9am–2pm Sun; ☀ Atocha Renfe)

Barajas airport (Aeropuerto de Barajas; ☎ 91 305 86 56; T1, ground fl & T4; ☎ 8am–8pm Mon–Sat, 9am–2pm Sun; ☀ Aeropuerto or Aeropuerto T4)

Chamartín train station (☎ 91 315 99 76; ☎ 8am–8pm Mon–Sat, 9am–2pm Sun; ☀ Chamartín)

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Although things are slowly changing, Madrid remains something of an obstacle course for disabled travellers. Your first stop for more information on accessibility for travellers should be the Madrid tourist office website section known as **Accessible Madrid** (www.esmadrid.com), where you can download a calendar of guided tours for travellers with a disability, as well as a list of wheelchair-friendly hotels, restaurants and museums; among the latter are the Museo del Prado (p90), Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza (p95) and the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (p82), although few museums have guides in Braille or allow visually impaired people to touch objects. The Ayuntamiento's programme of guided tours includes tours for blind, deaf and wheelchair travellers, as well as travellers with an intellectual disability. Such tours run once or twice a month on Saturdays at noon or 6pm; check the website for full details. Audio loops for the hearing impaired in cinemas are almost nonexistent, although most Spanish television channels allow you to turn on subtitles.

When it comes to transport, metro lines built since the late 1990s generally have elevators for wheelchair access, but the older lines are generally ill equipped; the updated metro maps available from any metro station (or at www.metromadrid.es, in Spanish) show stations with wheelchair access. On board the metro the name of the next station is usually announced (if the broadcast system is working, which it doesn't always!).

The single-deck *piso bajo* (low floor) buses have no steps inside and in some cases have ramps that can be used by people in wheelchairs. In the long term, there are plans to make at least 50% of buses on all routes accessible to people with a disability. **Radio-Teléfono Taxi** (☎ 91 547 82 00, 91 547 86 00) runs taxis for people with a disability. Generally, if you call any taxi company and ask for a 'eurotaxi' you should be sent one adapted for wheelchair users.

One attraction specifically for visually impaired travellers and Spaniards is the **Museo Tifológico** (Museum for the Blind; Map p123; ☎ 91 589 42 00; http://museo.once.es; Calle de la Coruña 18; admission free; ☎ 10am–2pm & 5–8pm Tue–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat; ☀ Estrecho). Run by the National Organisation for the Blind (ONCE; see below), its exhibits (all of which may be touched) include paintings, sculptures and tapestries, as well as more than 40 scale models of world monuments, including Madrid's Palacio Real and Cibeles fountain, as well as La Alhambra in Granada and the aqueduct in Segovia. It also provides leaflets in Braille and audio guides to the museum.

Further Information

The Spanish association for the blind, **ONCE** (Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles; Map pp110–11; ☎ 91 577 37 56, 91 532 50 00; www.once.es; Calle de Prim 3; ☀ Chueca or Colón), publishes a series of guides in Braille, although not every year.

Hearing-impaired travellers can contact the Comunidad de Madrid's Federation for the Deaf, **Fesorcam** (Federación de Personas Sordas de la Comunidad de Madrid; Map pp126–7; ☎ 91 725 37 57, 91 726 38 43; www.fesorcam.org, in Spanish; Calle de Ferrer del Río 33; ☀ Diego de León).

Travellers with an intellectual disability may wish to contact **FEAPS Madrid** (Map pp126–7; Federación de Organizaciones en Favor de Personas con Discapacidad Intelectual; ☎ 91 501 83 35; www.feapsmadrid.org, in Spanish; Avenida de la Ciudad de Barcelona 108; ☀ Menéndez Pelayo).

Outside Spain, national associations that can offer (sometimes including Madrid-specific) advice:

Access-able Travel Source (☎ 303-232 2979; www.access-able.com; PO Box 1796, Wheatridge, CO, USA)

Accessible Travel & Leisure (☎ 0145 272 9739; www.accessibletravel.co.uk) Claims to be the biggest UK travel agent dealing with travel for the disabled. The company encourages the disabled to travel independently.

Holiday Care (☎ 0845 124 9971; www.holidaycare.org.uk; The Hawkins Ste, Enham Place, Enham Alamein, Andover SP11 6JS, UK)

Mobility International USA (☎ 541-343 1284; www.miusa.org; 132 East Broadway, Ste 343, Eugene, Oregon 97401, USA)

Royal Association for Disability & Rehabilitation (RADAR; ☎ 020-7250 3222; www.radar.org.uk; 12 City Forum, 250 City Rd, London, EC1V 8AF, UK) Publishes a useful guide called *Holidays & Travel Abroad: A Guide for Disabled People*

Society for Accessible Travel and Hospitality (☎ 212-447 7284; www.sath.org; 347 5th Ave, Ste 610, New York, NY 10016, USA)

VISAS

Spain is one of 24 member countries of the Schengen Convention, under which EU member countries (except the UK and Ireland) plus Iceland and Norway have abolished checks at common borders. Legal residents of one Schengen country do not require a visa for another Schengen country. Citizens of the UK, Ireland and Switzerland are also exempt. Nationals of the 10 countries that entered the EU in May 2004 (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovak Republic and Slovenia) don't need visas for tourist visits or even to take up residence in Spain, but won't have the full work rights enjoyed by other EU citizens until 2011. Nationals of many other countries, including Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand and the USA, do not require visas for tourist visits of up to 90 days. All non-EU nationals entering Spain for any reason other than tourism (such as study or work) should contact a Spanish consulate, as they may need a specific visa.

If you're a citizen of a non-Schengen country not mentioned in this section, check with a Spanish consulate about whether you need a visa. The standard tourist visa issued by Spanish consulates (and usually valid for all Schengen countries unless conditions are attached) is valid for up to 90 days and is not renewable inside Spain.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Women travellers have no special reason to fear Madrid as serious harassment of women travellers is rare and seldom extends beyond stares, occasional catcalls and unnecessary

comments that you find in most Western European cities. Think twice about walking alone down empty city streets at night.

In the extremely rare event that you are the victim of sexual violence, contact the police (p270), while the **Asociación de Asistencia a Mujeres Violadas** (Association for Assistance to Raped Women; Map pp126–7; ☎ 91 574 01 10; Calle de O'Donnell 42; 🕒 10am–2pm & 4–7pm Mon–Thu, 10am–4pm Fri; 📍 O'Donnell) offers advice and help to rape victims; staff speak only limited English. You could also call the hotline for victims of sexual violence at ☎ 902 180 995.

WORK

Nationals of EU countries, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland are able to work in Spain without a visa, but for stays of more than three months they should apply for a *tarjeta de residencia* (residence card).

Virtually everyone else seeking to work in Spain is supposed to obtain, from a Spanish consulate in their country of residence, a work permit and, if they plan to stay more than 90 days, a residence visa. These procedures are well nigh impossible unless you have a job contract lined up before you begin them (or unless you're married to a Spaniard). Many people do, however, work without tangling with the bureaucracy.

Perhaps the easiest source of work for foreigners is teaching English (or another foreign language), but, even with full qualifications, non-EU citizens will find permanent positions scarce. Most of the larger, more reputable schools will hire only non-EU citizens who already have work and/or residence permits, but their attitude becomes more flexible if demand for teachers is high and you have particularly good qualifications. In the case of EU citizens, employers will generally help you through the bureaucratic minefield.

Madrid is loaded with 'cowboy outfits' that pay badly and often aren't overly concerned about quality. Still, the only way you'll find out is by hunting around. Schools are listed under *Academias de Idiomas* in the *Páginas Amarillas* (Yellow Pages).

Sources of information on possible teaching work include foreign cultural centres (the British Council, Alliance Française etc), foreign-language bookshops and university notice boards. Many language schools have notice boards where you may find work opportunities, or where you can advertise your

own services. Cultural institutes you may want to try include the following.

Alliance Française (Map pp64–5; ☎ 91 435 15 32; www.alliancefrancaisemadrid.net, in Spanish; Cuesta de Santo Domingo 13; 📍 Santo Domingo)

British Council (Map pp116–17; ☎ 91 337 35 00; www.britishcouncil.es; Paseo del General Martínez Campos 31; 📍 Iglesia)

Goethe Institut (Map pp116–17; ☎ 91 391 39 44; www.goethe.de/madrid, in German or Spanish; Calle de Zurbarán 21; 📍 Colón)

Translating and interpreting could be an option if you are fluent in Spanish and have a language that's in demand.

Another option might be au pair work, organised before you come to Spain. A useful guide is *The Au Pair and Nanny's Guide to Working Abroad*, by Susan Griffith and Sharon Legg. Susan Griffith has also written *Work Your Way Around the World* and *Teaching English Abroad*.

Doing Business

Madrid has, in the past decade, imposed itself as the financial as well as political capital of Spain, much to the chagrin of eternal rival Barcelona, which was once considered the country's economic motor. The kind of comparison people used to draw between the two cities and Rome and Milan (respectively the political and financial capitals of Italy) increasingly seems misplaced.

Much of Madrid's business activity takes place in the northern half of the city centre, on and around the Paseo de la Castellana. The biggest trade fairs are held in the complex of the Feria de Madrid, east of the city near the airport.

People looking to expand their business into Spain should contact their own country's trade department (such as the DTI in the UK). The commercial department of the Spanish embassy in your own country should also have information – at least on negotiating the country's epic red tape. The trade office of your embassy may be able to help.

The **Cámara Oficial de Comercio e Industria de Madrid** (City Chamber of Commerce; ☎ 91 538 35 00; www.camaramadrid.es; Calle de Ribera del Loira 56–58; 📍 Campo de las Naciones) offers advisory services on most aspects of doing or setting up business in Madrid, as well as video-conferencing facilities and an accessible business database. The

chamber has an **office** (☎ 91 305 88 07) in terminal T1 (arrivals hall) at Barajas airport with fax, phone and photocopy facilities, and a small meeting area.

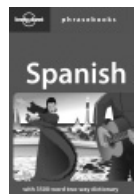
Exhibitions & Conferences

The **Oficina de Congresos de Madrid** (Madrid Convention Bureau; Map pp64–5; ☎ 91 480 24 05; Patronato de Turismo office, Plaza Mayor 27; 📍 Sol) publishes the *Guía de Congresos e Incentivos* (also in a CD-ROM version), in Spanish and English, which can be helpful for those interested in organising meetings or conventions.

Madrid's main trade-fair centre is the **Feria de Madrid** (IFEMA; ☎ 902 221 515; www.ifema.es, in Spanish; Parque Ferial Juan Carlos I; 📍 Campo de las Naciones) in Campo de las Naciones, one metro stop from the airport. It hosts events throughout the year. Another important trade-fair centre is the **Palacio de Congresos y Exposiciones** (Map p123; ☎ 91 337 81 00; www.pcm.tourspain.es; Paseo de la Castellana 99; 📍 Santiago Bernabéu). The auditorium can seat 2000 people and there are smaller meeting rooms, with technical support and secretarial services.

You can review the month's upcoming trade fairs in the free *EsMadrid.com* booklet available at tourist offices.

Español (Spanish), often referred to as *castellano* (Castilian) to distinguish it from other regional languages spoken in Spain, is the language of Madrid. The conservative Real Academia Española, located near the Prado, watches over Cervantes' tongue with deadly solemnity and issues the country's version of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the weighty *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*.



While you'll find an increasing number of madrileños, especially younger people and hotel and restaurant employees, who speak some English, don't count on it. Those of you who learn a little Spanish will be amply rewarded as Spaniards always appreciate the effort, no matter how basic your mastery of the language. Madrileños tend to talk at high volume and high velocity. Although the Spanish you learned at school will be fine for most situations, you may start to flounder once the locals revert to local *cheli* (slang).

If you want to learn more Spanish than we've included here, pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's comprehensive but user-friendly *Spanish Phrasebook* or the more compact *Fast Talk Spanish*.

SOCIAL

Meeting People

Hello.
¡Hola!
Goodbye.
¡Adiós!
Please.
Por favor.
Thank you.
(Muchas) Gracias.
Yes.
Sí.
No.
No.
Excuse me.
Perdón.
Sorry.
¡Perdón!/¡Perdóneme!
Do you speak English?
¿Habla inglés?
Does anyone speak English?
¿Hay alguien que hable inglés?
Do you understand?
¿Me entiende?
Yes, I understand.
Sí, entiendo.
No, I don't understand.
No, no entiendo.
Pardon?; What?
¿Cómo?

Could you please ...?
¿Puede ... por favor?

Speak more slowly hablar más despacio
repeat that repetir
write it down escribirlo

Going Out

What's there to do in the evenings?
¿Qué se puede hacer por las noches?
Is there a local entertainment guide?
¿Hay una guía del ocio de la zona?

What's on ...?
¿Qué hay...?
locally en la zona
this weekend este fin de semana
today hoy
tonight esta noche

Where are the ...?
¿Dónde hay ...?
places to eat lugares para comer
nightclubs discotecas
pubs pubs
gay venues lugares gay

PRACTICAL

Question Words

Who? ¿Quién? (sg)
¿Quiénes? (pl)
What? ¿Qué?
Which? ¿Cuál? (sg)
¿Cuáles? (pl)
When? ¿Cuándo?
Where? ¿Dónde?

How? ¿Cómo?
How much? ¿Cuánto?
How many? ¿Cuántos?
How much is it? ¿Cuánto cuesta?
Why? ¿Por qué?

Numbers & Amounts

0 cero
1 una/uno
2 dos
3 tres
4 cuatro
5 cinco
6 seis
7 siete
8 ocho
9 nueve
10 diez
11 once
12 doce
13 trece
14 catorce
15 quince
16 dieciséis
17 diecisiete
18 dieciocho
19 diecinueve
20 veinte
21 veintiuno
22 veintidós
30 treinta
31 treinta y uno
32 treinta y dos
40 cuarenta
50 cincuenta
60 sesenta
70 setenta
80 ochenta
90 noventa
100 cien
1000 mil
2000 dos mil

Days

Monday lunes
Tuesday martes
Wednesday miércoles
Thursday jueves
Friday viernes
Saturday sábado
Sunday domingo

Banking

I'd like to change some money.
Me gustaría cambiar dinero.

I'd like to change a travellers cheque.
Me gustaría cobrar un cheque de viaje.

Where's the nearest ...?
¿Dónde está ... más cercano?
ATM el cajero automático
foreign exchange la oficina de cambio
office

Do you accept ...?
¿Aceptan ...?
credit cards tarjetas de crédito
debit cards tarjetas de débito
travellers cheques cheques de viaje

Post

Where's the post office?
¿Dónde está Correos?

I want to send a/an ...
Quería enviar ...
fax un fax
parcel un paquete
postcard una postal

I want to buy a/an ...
Quería comprar ...
aerogramme un aerograma
envelope un sobre
stamp/stamps un sello/sellos

Phones & Internet

I want to buy a phone card.
Quería comprar una tarjeta telefónica.

I want to make a ...
Quería hacer ...
call (to ...) una llamada a ...
reverse-charge/ una llamada a cobro
collect call revertido

Where can I find a/an ...?
¿Dónde se puede encontrar un ...?
I'd like a/an ...
Quería un ...
adaptor plug adaptador
charger for my cargador para mi
phone teléfono
mobile/cell phone móvil para alquilar
for hire
prepaid mobile/ móvil de prepago
cell phone
SIM card for tarjeta SIM para
your network su red

Where's the local internet cafe?
¿Dónde hay un ciber (café) cercano?

I'd like to ...

Quería ...	
get internet access	conectarme (a internet)
check my email	revisar mi correo electrónico

Transport

What time does the ... leave?

¿A qué hora sale el ...?

bus	autobús
bus (intercity)	autocar
plane	avión
train	tren

What time's the ... bus?

¿A qué hora sale el ... autocar/autobús?

first	primer
last	último
next	próximo

Is this taxi free?

¿Está libre este taxi?
Please put the meter on.
Por favor, ponga el taxímetro.

How much is it to ...?

¿Cuánto cuesta ir a ...?
Please take me (to this address).
Por favor, lléveme (a esta dirección).

FOOD

breakfast	desayuno
lunch	comida
dinner	cena
snack	tentempié

Can you recommend a ...?

¿Puede recomendar un ...?

bar	bar
café	café
coffee bar	cafetería
restaurant	restaurante

A table for ..., please.

Una mesa para ..., por favor.
Is service/cover charge included in the bill?

¿Está incluido el servicio en la cuenta?

Do you have a menu in English?

¿Tienen un menú en inglés?

I'm a vegetarian.
Soy vegetariano/a. (m/f)

Do you have any vegetarian dishes?

¿Tienen algún plato vegetariano?
I'm allergic to peanuts.
Soy alérgico/a a los cacahuets. (m/f)

What is today's special?

¿Cuál es el plato del día?
What would you recommend?
¿Qué recomienda?
I'd like the set lunch, please.
Quería el menú del día, por favor.
The bill, please.

La cuenta, por favor.
Good health/Cheers!
¡Salud!
Thank you, that was delicious.
Muchas gracias, estaba buenísimo.

For more detailed information on food and dining out, see p156.

EMERGENCIAS

Help!
¡Socorro!
It's an emergency!
¡Es una emergencia!
Could you help me please?
¿Me puede ayudar, por favor?
Where's the police station?
¿Dónde está la comisaría?
Where are the toilets?
¿Dónde están los servicios?

Call ...!
¡Llame a ...!
the police la policía
a doctor un médico
an ambulance una ambulancia

HEALTH

Where's the nearest ...?
¿Dónde está ... más cercano?
(night) chemist la farmacia (de guardia)
doctor el médico
hospital el hospital

I need a doctor (who speaks English).
Necesito un doctor (que hable inglés).

I have (a/an) ...
Tengo ...
diarrhoea diarrea
fever fiebre
headache dolor de cabeza
pain dolor

I'm allergic to ...
Soy alérgico/a a ... (m/f)
antibiotics los antibióticos
peanuts los cacahuets

GLOSSARY

abierto – open
abono – season pass
acueducto – aqueduct
aduana – customs
albergue juvenil – youth hostel; not to be confused with *hostal*
alcalde – mayor
alcázar – Muslim-era fortress
Almoravid – Islamic Berbers who founded an empire in North Africa that spread over much of Spain in the 11th century and laid siege to Madrid in 1110
apartado de correos – post-office box
auto-da-fé – elaborate execution ceremony staged by the Inquisition
autonomía – autonomous community or region; Spain's 50 provincias are grouped into 17 of these
autopista – motorway (with tolls)
AVE – Tren de Alta Velocidad Española; high-speed train
Ayuntamiento – city or town hall; city or town council
asadador – restaurant specialising in roasted meats
bailaores – flamenco dancers
baño completo – full bathroom, with a toilet, shower and/or bath, and washbasin
barrio – district, quarter (of a town or city)
biblioteca – library
billete – ticket (see also *entrada*)
bodega – literally, 'cellar' (especially a wine cellar); also means a winery or a traditional wine bar likely to serve wine from the barrel
bomberos – fire brigade
bota – leather wine or sherry bottle
botellón – literally 'big bottle'; young adolescents partying outdoors
buzón – postbox
cajero automático – automated teller machine (ATM)
calle – street
callejón – lane
cama – bed
cambio – change; currency exchange
cantaor/cantaora – flamenco singer (male/female)
capilla – chapel
Carnaval – carnival; a period of fancy-dress parades and merrymaking, usually ending on the Tuesday 47 days before Easter Sunday
carnet – identity card or driving licence
carretera – highway
casa de comidas – the most basic restaurants specialising in simple, cheap Spanish cooking; aimed at workers on their lunch breaks, they're often only open for lunch Monday to Friday
casco – literally, 'helmet'; often used to refer to the old part of a city
castillo – castle
castizo – literally 'pure'; refers to people and things distinctly from Madrid
catedral – cathedral
centro de salud – health centre
ceranías – local trains serving big cities, suburbs and nearby towns; local train network
cerrado – closed
certificado – registered mail
cervecera – bar where the focus is on beer
chato – glass
churrigueresque – ornate style of Baroque architecture named after the brothers Alberto and José Churriguera
comedor – dining room
comunidad – fixed charge for maintenance of rental accommodation
Comunidad de Madrid – Madrid province
condones – condoms; also called *preservativos*
consejo – council
consigna – a left-luggage office or lockers
coro – choir stall
Correos – post office
corrida (de toros) – bullfight
Cortes – national parliament
cuesta – lane (usually on a hill)
cutre – basic or rough-and-ready
día del espectador – cut-price ticket day at cinemas
diapositiva – slide film
discoteca – nightclub
documento nacional de identidad (DNI) – national identity card
ducha – shower
duende – an indefinable word that captures the passionate essence of flamenco
embajada – embassy
entrada – entrance; ticket for a performance
estación de autobuses – bus station
estanco – tobacconist shop
farmacia – pharmacy
faro – lighthouse
feria – fair; can refer to trade fairs as well as city, town or village fairs, bullfights or festivals lasting days or weeks
ferrocarril – railway
fiesta – festival, public holiday or party
fin de semana – weekend
flamenco – traditional Spanish musical form involving any or all of guitarist, singer and dancer and sometimes accompanying musicians
fútbol – football (soccer)
gasóleo – diesel
gasolina – petrol (a *gasolinera* is a petrol station)
gatos – literally 'cats'; colloquial name for madrileños
gitanos – the Roma people (formerly known as the Gypsies)
glorieta – big roundabout
guiri – foreigner

- habitaciones libres** – rooms available
habitación doble – twin room
horno de asador – restaurant with a wood-burning roasting oven
hostal – hostel; not to be confused with *albergue juvenil*
iglesia – church
infanta – princess
infante – prince
interprovincial – national (call)
IVA – impuesto sobre el valor añadido (value-added tax)
judería – Jewish quarter
largo recorrido – long-distance train
lavabo – washbasin; a polite term for toilet
lavandería – laundrette
librería – bookshop
lista de correos – poste restante
llamada a cobro revertido – reverse-charges (collect) call
locutorio – telephone centre
luz – electricity
macarras – Madrid’s rough but usually likable lads
madrileño – a person from Madrid
marcha – action, life, ‘the scene’
marisquería – seafood eatery
media raciones – a serving of tapas, somewhere between the size of tapas and raciones
menú del día – fixed-price meal available at lunchtime, sometimes evening, too; often just called a *menú*
mercado – market
meseta – the high tableland of central Spain
metropolitana – local (call)
mezquita – mosque
monasterio – monastery
morería – former Islamic quarter in town
moro – ‘Moor’ or Muslim, usually in medieval context
moto – moped or motorcycle
movida madrileña – the halcyon days of the post-Franco years when the city plunged into an excess of nightlife, drugs and cultural expression
mozarab – Christians who lived in Muslim-ruled Spain; also style of architecture
mudéjar – Muslim living under Christian rule in medieval Spain, also refers to their style of architecture
muralla – city wall
museo – museum
objetos perdidos – lost-and-found office
oficina de turismo – tourist office
Páginas Amarillas – *Yellow Pages* phone directory
panteón – pantheon (monument to a famous dead person)
parador – state-owned hotel in a historic building
pensión – guesthouse
peques – children; little ones
pijo/pija – male/female yuppie (can also mean snob, beautiful people)
piscina – swimming pool
plateresco – plateresque; ornate architectural style popular in Spain during the 16th century
plaza mayor – main plaza; square
preservativos – condoms; also *condones*
provincial – (call) within the same province
pueblo – village
puente – bridge
puerta – door or gate
RACE – Real Automóvil Club de España; Royal Automobile Club of Spain
ración – meal-sized serve of tapas
rastró – flea market, car-boot (trunk) sale; El Rastro is Madrid’s (and Europe’s) largest flea market
ronda – ring road
salida – exit or departure
Semana Santa – Holy Week; the week leading up to Easter Sunday
servicios – toilets
sierra – mountain range
sinagoga – synagogue
sol – sun
sombra – shade
tabernas – taverns
taifa – small Muslim kingdom in medieval Spain
tapas – bar snacks traditionally served on a saucer or lid (‘tapa’ literally means a lid)
taquilla – ticket window/office
tarde – afternoon
tarjeta de crédito – credit card
tarjeta de residencia – residence card
tarjeta telefónica – phonecard
tasca – tapas bar
temporada alta/media/baja – high, mid- or low season
terrazza – terrace; usually means outdoor tables of a café, bar or restaurant; can also mean rooftop open-air place
tetería – teahouse, usually in Middle Eastern style with low seats and round low tables
tienda – shop or tent
torero – bullfighter or matador
toro – bull
torreón – tower
turismo – means both tourism and saloon car
urgencia – first-aid station
villa – town
vinoteca – wine bar
zarzuela – form of Spanish dance and music, usually satirical
zona de movida – an area of town where lively bars and discos are clustered

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