



Madrid & Toledo Tour

Thursday 14th to Sunday 17th October, 2027



Madrid historic centre

This is a wonderful opportunity to see Madrid and medieval Toledo on and off the beaten track. Course leaders from Art & Culture Travel will provide guidance full of knowledge and enthusiasm.

The cultural centre of Madrid is famous for its exceptional range of first-class museums, as well as for its vibrant restaurants and bars. Medieval Toledo on the other hand, gives you a strong sense of stepping back to a time in Al-Andalus when Christians, Muslims and Jews lived side-by-side and produced hybrid architectural styles that are unique to Spain.

Join us for an uplifting few days in Autumn.

“The world of reality has its limits; the world of imagination is boundless.”

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Thursday 14th October

Hotel Catalonia Las Cortes. Meet in the lobby at 15.00. Afternoon 16.00 – 17.30 Palacio Liria, Casa de Alba.

The Liria Palace is a Neo-classical building, designed by Lutyens, and is the home of the Dukes of Alba. It contains a remarkable private collection of European art and has just recently been opened to the public.

Evening 17.30. We take taxis to the Royal Chapel of St Anthony of La Florida. Goya's burial place, where he executed breathtakingly beautiful frescoes, this little-known gem of a Neoclassical church was built at the end of the eighteenth century and declared a national monument in 1905.

We will then eat at Casa Mingo which is close by. Opened in 1888, as you walk in you immediately feel you have stepped back in time. Noisy and filled with locals, it is a fun place to go on the first night

Friday 15th October

Meet in the lobby at 09.00. Taxis to the National Archaeological Museum of Madrid. 9.30-11.00

This is one of the world's great archaeological museums, founded in 1867 by Royal Decree of Queen Isabel II. We will focus mainly on the Islamic section, examining selected items in some detail and broadening our understanding of the medieval period, when 'Spain' was divided into the Moorish and Christian kingdoms. We will then have a coffee break before heading off to our next venue.

12.00 – 13.30 Visit to Joaquín Sorolla's house.

Sorolla (1863-1923) was one of the most revered artists of his day. His works were shown in 2023 at the Royal Academy's 'Spain and the Hispanic World' exhibition. We will enjoy a unique visit (non-guided) to his studio and the house where he lived towards the end of his life with his wife Clotilde.

14.00 – 16.00

A Leisurely lunch at one of Madrid's many fine restaurants

16.30 -18.30 - The Prado Museum.

We explore the Spanish collections in the Prado starting with El Greco and ending with Goya. We will look at some wonderful Zurbaran paintings, including spectacular still-lives. We will spend time with Velázquez and marvel at his technique while hearing the story of his most famous painting, Las Meninas. You will then have free time to explore other areas of the Prado's collection, before the museum closes at 8pm.



Goya. Clothed Maja. 1800-1805. Prado Museum

Evening - Free, or optional visit to the Cardomomo Club for an authentic Flamenco show.



Joaquín Sorolla. Walk on the Beach 1909. Sorolla House Museum, Madrid.

Saturday 16th October

Meet in the lobby at 08.15. Taxis to Atocha station and train to Toledo. 08.50 – 09.23

We will start our exploration of medieval Toledo at the former mosque of Bab al-Mardum, an outstanding example of Mudejar architecture. We will then visit the church of San Roman, with its remarkable Apocalyptic frescoes, and now the home of the city's Visigothic museum.

Next will be Santa Maria la Blanca, one of only two surviving medieval Spanish synagogues. We then visit the fourteenth century church of San Tome, where we will see one of El Greco's finest paintings. Last but not least we visit the El Transito synagogue, with its Sephardic museum.



Mosque of Bab al-Mardum/Church of Cristo de la Luz, Toledo

14.00-15.30 Lunch. After lunch we will spend some time in Toledo's spectacular thirteenth century Cathedral, considered by many to be the *magnus opus* of the gothic style in Spain, though the cloisters do retain some Mudejar characteristics. In the Sacristy we will see the impressive collection of paintings by El Greco.

18.25 – 19.58 Train to Madrid. Evening – Free

Sunday 17th October

Meet in the lobby at 09.30. Walk to the Reina Sofia. 10.30-12.30

This is Spain's Museum of 20th and 21st Century art and was inaugurated in 1992. It is dedicated almost exclusively to Spanish art and has some of the great masterpieces, including Picasso's Guernica. Artists such as Miró and Tapiés and sculptors such as Gonzalez and Gargallo can be found amongst works by Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí, Henry Moore and Alexander Calder, to name a few.



Pablo Picasso. Guernica. Reina Sofia.

13.00 – 14.30 Lunch in Reina Sofia, Restaurante Arzabal, followed by a stroll to the Thyssen-Bornemisza.

15.00 – 16. 30.Guided visit to the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection

With nearly 1,000 works on display, the collection offers an extraordinary overview of art from the 13th Century to the twentieth century. We will be focussing on the Renaissance and the 19th and 20th Centuries.

16.30 Return to hotel to take taxis to the airport. We recommend flights after 20.00

(Itinerary subject to variations).

Course Leaders

Dr. Jacqueline Cockburn is co-founder and director of Art & Culture Travel. She is a course director at the V&A, and also lectures for The Royal Academy and The Art Fund.

Ian Cockburn is co-founder and director of Art & Culture Travel and has an MA from the Courtauld Institute in medieval Spanish art history.

Both are lecturers accredited by The Arts Society.

Fees (minimum 12 people/maximum 16 people) £1,950 per person (shared room)

The fee covers three nights' accommodation at the 4-star Hotel Catalonia las Cortes (including breakfasts). All teaching and guiding by two specialist art historians over four days. All museum and other entry fees. All taxis within Madrid and Toledo. Return train journey to Toledo. Thursday supper at Casa Mingo; Friday, Saturday and Sunday lunches.

Not included in the fees: Flights, transfers to and from the airport in Madrid, travel and medical insurance, evening meals apart from Thursday, and other miscellaneous costs. 50 euros per head for optional Flamenco show on Saturday evening. **Single room supplement 20%.**

Fitness: Please note, a good level of fitness and mobility is required for walking and visiting galleries. This is for your own comfort and to ensure your fellow travellers are not inconvenienced.

Hotel Catalonia las Cortes. Del Prado, 6, Madrid historic centre. A former 18th Century palace, now modernised, this four-star hotel is very near the Prado and other key museums. It is located in the same street as the Athanaeum Club of Madrid, very close to the colourful Plaza Santa Ana, , with plenty of nearby restaurants and bars. The hotel is welcoming and comfortable, with friendly staff and a very fine breakfast.

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