



# THE GUIDE FOR MADRID!

**Your New Life in Spain Awaits:**  
*From Visa Information to Settling into Madrid's Vibrant Culture, We've Got You Covered!*





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## 1. Preparing for the Move

### Visa Options:

- You'll need a visa if you plan to stay longer than 90 days. Popular choices include:
  - **Digital Nomad Visa:** This is for remote workers and freelancers who earn income outside of Spain.
  - **Non-Lucrative Visa:** If you have sufficient funds and don't plan to work in Spain.
  - **Work Visa:** For those who have secured employment with a Spanish company.
  - **Student Visa:** If you're studying in Spain for over 90 days.
- **NIE (Foreigner Identification Number):** Essential for legal activities like opening a bank account or renting a property. Apply for this soon after arrival through the local police station or **Extranjería** office.

### Health Insurance:

- Non-EU citizens need **private health insurance** for visa applications and during their stay.
- Companies like **Sanitas**, **Adeslas**, or **Mapfre** offer plans tailored to expats.
- Upon registration with Spain Social Security Administration, you may be eligible for Spain's **public healthcare**.

## 2. Finding a Home in Madrid

### A few Popular Neighborhoods:

- **Salamanca:** Upscale, family-friendly, close to high-end shops.
- **Malasaña:** Trendy, youthful, known for nightlife.
- **Chamberí:** Traditional, central, and popular among professionals.
- **Lavapiés:** Diverse, multicultural, with a strong artistic scene.

### Finding Rentals:

- Use websites like **Idealista**, **Fotocasa**, or **Spotahome**.
- Consider working with a **real estate agent** for access to exclusive listings.
- Prepare a **security deposit** (usually one- or two-months' rent), proof of income, and your NIE.

### Utilities Setup:

- Providers like **Iberdrola** and **Endesa** offer electricity and gas.
- Canal de Isabel II manages water.
- **Internet** options include **Movistar**, **Vodafone**, and **Orange**. Set up appointments for installations ahead of time.



### 3. Setting Up Finances

#### Opening a Bank Account:

- Popular banks include **BBVA**, **Santander**, and **CaixaBank**.
- You'll need your **NIE**, passport, and proof of address.
- Ask about **expat-friendly accounts** with lower fees and English-speaking support.

#### Currency Exchange & Transfers:

- Use services like **Wise (formerly TransferWise)** or **Revolut** for competitive rates.
- Many expats keep a U.S. account for ease of transferring money.

#### Understanding Taxes:

- If you reside in Spain for more than **183 days per year**, you are considered a **tax resident** and must declare worldwide income.
- Spain has **double taxation treaties** with the U.S. to avoid being taxed twice on the same income.
- Consulting a **tax advisor** familiar with U.S.-Spain tax laws is advisable to navigate complex situations.

### 4. Navigating the Healthcare System

**Public Healthcare:** Available once registered with **Social Security**. Registration requires proof of employment or residency.

**Private Healthcare:** Expats often use private insurance for faster access to specialists.

**Pharmacies (Farmacias):** Look for a green cross sign for over-the-counter and prescription medications. Many pharmacists speak English.

### 5. Education for Families

#### School Types:

- **Public Schools:** Free, with instruction in Spanish.
- **Semi-Private (Concertado) Schools:** Partly funded by the state, often with bilingual programs.
- **International Schools:** For English-speaking education, including **International Baccalaureate (IB)** programs (e.g., **American School of Madrid**).

#### Enrollment Process:

- Gather necessary documents like birth certificates, vaccination records, and proof of residency (Empadromiento).
- Start the application process early, as spots can be competitive in top schools.



## 6. Adapting to Culture and Language

### Learning Spanish:

- Enroll in language schools like **Tandem Madrid** or **International House**.
- Join **language exchange programs (intercambios)** to practice with locals.

### Cultural Etiquette:

- A casual "**dos besos**" (two kisses) is a common greeting.
- Lunch is the main meal, usually between **2 PM and 4 PM**. Dinner often starts late, around **9 PM** or later.
- Sundays are family days—many shops close, and people gather in parks or at home.

## 7. Transportation and Getting Around

### Public Transport:

- Madrid's **Metro system** is extensive and affordable, with options like the **Tarjeta de Transporte Público** for unlimited travel.
- **Cercanías** trains connect Madrid to nearby towns and suburbs.
- **Buses** are an efficient way to reach areas outside of metro coverage.

### Driving in Spain:

- Americans can drive with their U.S. license for up to **6 months**. After that, you need to exchange it for a Spanish license.
- Parking can be difficult in central Madrid, so many expats rely on public transport.

## 8. Social Life and Making Connections

### Expat Communities:

- Join groups like **International**, **Meetup**, and Facebook groups focused on expats in Madrid.
- Attend local events and **networking sessions** to meet fellow expats and locals.

### Exploring Madrid:

- Visit famous sites like **El Retiro Park**, **Prado Museum**, and **Puerta del Sol**.
- Embrace the **tapas culture** in areas like **La Latina** or **Malasaña**—many bars offer free tapas with drinks.

**Day Trips:** Take advantage of Madrid's central location for **Toledo**, **Segovia**, or **El Escorial** trips.



## 9. Local Services and Practical Tips

### Emergency Numbers:

- Dial **112** for emergencies.
- For non-urgent medical needs, visit your local **Centro de Salud**.

### Shopping for Essentials:

- **Mercadona**, **Carrefour**, and **Día** are popular grocery stores.
- For international ingredients, visit specialty stores like **Taste of America**.

### Bringing Pets:

- Make sure to have a Health Certificate endorsed by the USDA from the U.S.
- Make sure your pet has an **EU pet passport** and up-to-date vaccinations.
- Research pet-friendly neighborhoods and parks like **Casa de Campo** or **El Retiro**.

## 10. Key Contacts and Resources

**U.S. Embassy in Madrid:** Address: **Calle de Serrano, 75, 28006 Madrid**. Phone: **+34 91 587 2200**.

**Spanish Government Websites:** visit [sede.administracionespublicas.gob.es](http://sede.administracionespublicas.gob.es).

### ***\*Please Note: Information Subject to Change***

*The details provided in this guide are based on the most current information available at the time of publication. However, aspects such as visa requirements, residency processes, tax regulations, and local services in Madrid can change frequently due to updates in government policies, economic conditions, or local regulations. We recommend regularly checking official sources such as the **Spanish government websites**, **U.S. Embassy in Madrid**, or consulting with local professionals like **immigration lawyers** and **tax advisors** for the latest updates.*

*By using this guide, you acknowledge that while we strive to provide accurate and up-to-date information, we **cannot guarantee that all details remain current at all times**. It's essential to verify critical information before making decisions or taking action.*

## Download the PDF Guide

Get a full copy of this guide in a convenient **PDF format** to keep on hand as you plan your move to Madrid!



## What are my intentions?

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## How do I Feel?

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## What does my life look like abroad?

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