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Great Art & Architecture of Spain: Madrid, Toledo, Segovia & Escorial

Saturday, September 21 to Sunday, September 29, 2024

Arranged by Classical Excursions



OVERVIEW OF THE ITINERARY

Breakfast and lunch are included each day and three dinners.

SATURDAY, September 21 · Independent Arrivals to Madrid

Check in to the five-star **Mandarin Oriental Ritz Hotel**, located in central Madrid and across the street from the renowned Museo Nacional del Prado. Welcome dinner tonight on the terrace of the Ritz.

SUNDAY, September 22 · Madrid

Pre-opening guided tour of the **Prado Museum** by a member of the curatorial staff. Lunch today at one of Madrid's oldest restaurants, **La Posada de la Villa**, dating back to 1642. Afternoon walking tour.

MONDAY, September 23 · Madrid

A private special opening of the vast and lavish **Royal Palace, Palacio Real de Madrid**. Lunch at **La Maquina Original**, a seafood restaurant. Afternoon visits to the **Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum** and other artists' homes like the **Sorolla Museum**. Dinner tonight at a private palace, **Palacio del Duque de San Carlos**.

TUESDAY, September 24 · Madrid and Escorial

We head northwest to the town of **El Escorial** for a visit to the imposing palace of **Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial**. Lunch at a restaurant. Heading back into Madrid, we will hopefully have an additional private visit and a little free-time late afternoon. Dinner tonight on your own.



WEDNESDAY, September 25 · Madrid and Segovia

We depart on a day-long excursion again to the northwest of Madrid, stopping first at the **Palacio Real de La Granja de San Ildefonso**, a sumptuous royal palace outside of **Segovia**. Then we go into the hilltop town of Segovia (image above) for lunch and free-time to explore. Return to Madrid, dinner on your own.

THURSDAY, September 26 · Madrid

We have a special visit to the **Liria Palace**, home of the Duchess of Alba in Madrid. The palace was completed in 1780. Lunch at **Lhardy**, one of Madrid's oldest restaurants, dating to 1839. This afternoon we'll visit the **Cerrablo Museum**, housed in a former mansion. Dinner on your own.

FRIDAY, September 27 · Madrid and Toledo

Today we head southwest to visit **Todolo**, where we will visit the **cathedral**, the **Iglesia de Santo Tomé** to view El Greco's *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*, painted in 1586. Following lunch at the Hacienda de Cardinal, a visit to the Moorish style Synagogues of **Santa Maria la Blanca** and **El Transito**. We return to Madrid in late afternoon. Dinner on your own.

SATURDAY, September 28 · Madrid and Aranjuez

To the south of Madrid is the **Palacio Real de Aranjuez** which was built in the 18th Century by the Habsburgs and later redone by the Bourbons. Then we visit the gardens at the **Casa del Labrador**. Lunch and a wine tasting at the **Regedal Country Wine Estate**. Afternoon return to Madrid and free time. This evening for our Farewell Dinner, we will be going to the private **Nuevo Club**.

SUNDAY, September 29 · Day for departures

Following breakfast, check out of the hotel and flight departures or onwards travels and independent explorations.

Great Art & Architecture of Spain: Madrid, Toledo, Segovia & Escorial

Saturday, September 21 to Sunday, September 29, 2024



DETAILED ITINERARY

Breakfast and lunch included daily, and three dinners including the Welcome and Farewell dinners.

SATURDAY - September 21

Check in to the five-star **Mandarin Oriental Ritz Hotel**, located in central Madrid and across the street from the renowned Museo Nacional del Prado. Two historic images below and the Palm Court as it appears today. This evening, enjoy a welcome dinner tonight on the terrace of the Ritz.



SUNDAY - September 22

A pre-opening guided tour through **Museo Nacional del Prado** by a member of the curatorial staff. The Prado contains the world's greatest collection of Spanish art, works by Velazquez and Goya among others. Housed in a neo-classical building from 1785 and designed by Juan de Villanueva it was opened as a museum already in 1819.



Lunch at one of Madrid's Oldest restaurants **La Posada de la Villa** dating back to 1642. In the afternoon we will have a **walking tour of the highlights of the city**, including some of the beautiful public spaces and neo-classical buildings of Madrid such as the Teatro Espanol. Dinner on your own tonight.

MONDAY, September 23

A private pre-opening tour of Madrid's vast and lavish **Royal Palace The Palacio Real**. The palace was commissioned by Felipe V in 1734 after a fire destroyed the previous palace. Construction took over 26 years and spanned the reigns of two Bourbon monarchs. Many of the palace interiors reflect the tastes of the later Carlos III and Carlos IV. The palace is still today used for state visits and receptions, though the current King



resides in a more modest palace on the outskirts of Madrid. Lunch at **La Maquina Original**, a seafood restaurant. Afternoon visits to the **Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum** and other artists' homes like the **Sorolla Museum**.

Dinner tonight at a private palace, **Palacio del Duque de San Carlos**.

TUESDAY, September 24

Today we will visit Felipe II's imposing palace of **San Lorenzo de El Escorial**, located ca. one hour from Madrid. The expansive structure stands out against the foothills of the Sierra de Guadarrama northwest of Madrid. Built between 1563-84 in honor of St. Lawrence, its unadorned severity set new architectural standards. The collections boast some of the most important works of art from the Royal Hapsburg collections. Visit the library, church, pantheon, and the royal apartments of this grand complex. Lunch in restaurant at El Escorial. Heading back into Madrid, we will hopefully have an additional private visit and a little free-time late afternoon.

Dinner on your own.



WEDNESDAY, September 25

We depart on a day-long excursion again to the northwest of Madrid, stopping first at the **Palacio Real de La Granja de San Ildefonso**, a sumptuous royal palace outside of **Segovia**. The palace was initiated in 1720 by Felipe V and is the final resting place for this king. Tour the splendid and elaborate interiors as well as the formal gardens and the high Baroque church. Then we go into the hilltop town of Segovia for a late lunch and free-time to explore one of Spain's most spectacularly sited towns, with the Old Town perched high on a rocky spur. See the Gothic Cathedral, distinctive castle Alcazar, or the Roman Aqueducts located in Segovia. Return to Madrid, dinner on your own.



THURSDAY, September 26

We start with a special visit to the **Liria Palace**, home of the Duchess of Alba, Madrid. The lavish palace was completed by Ventura Rodriguez in 1780 and was the residence for the Alba family. The palace is still owned by the Duchess of Alba and is not generally open to the public. The palace has an outstanding collection of art and Flemish tapestries. Paintings by Reubens, Titan and Rembrandt as well as Spanish artists such as Goya, El Greco and Velazquez. Lunch at **Lhardy**, one of Madrid's old iconic restaurants dating from 1839. In the afternoon, we will have a guided tour of the **Cerralbo Museum**, housed in a 19th century mansion and home of the avid art collector, the 17th Marquis of Cerralbo. The Marquis left his entire collection to the state in 1922, stipulating that all objects should remain exactly as he left them. The lavishly decorated interiors complement the museum's collections of Iberian pottery to 18th century marble busts and paintings by El Greco. Dinner on your own this evening.



FRIDAY, September 27

Today we head southwest to visit **Todolo**, which is one of Spain's most visited cities. It is picturesquely sited on a hill overlooking the Tagus River and still retains much of its historic character. We will visit the **Cathedral** (image below left), built between 1226 and 14993, the cathedral displays pure French Gothic design on the exterior and Spanish decorative embellishments on the interior. Then to **Iglesia de Santo Tomé** to view El Greco's *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*, painted in 1586. Following lunch at the **Hacienda de Cardinal**. In the afternoon, we visit the Moorish style Synagogues of **Santa Maria la Blanca** (image below middle) and **El Transito** (image below right). Santa Maria de la Blanca was erected in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century and is thought to be the oldest. We return to Madrid in late afternoon. Dinner on your own.





SATURDAY, September 28

To the south of Madrid is the **Palacio Real de Aranjuez** (images above and right) which was built in the 18th Century by the Habsburgs and later redone by the Bourbons. Highlights will be the numerous Baroque and Rococo interiors, including the famed Chinese Porcelain Room, the Hall of Mirrors, and the Smoking Room modeled on the Moorish style of the Alhambra in Granada. After our tour of the palace, we will continue on to the extensive gardens on our way to the **Casa del Labrador**, built by King Carlos IV as a lavish Neo-classical pavilion. Lunch and a wine tasting at the **Regedal Country Wine Estate** (image below). Afternoon return to Madrid and free time.

This evening for our Farewell Dinner, we will be going to the private **Nuevo Club**.



SUNDAY, September 29

Following breakfast, check out of the hotel and flight departures or onwards travels and independent explorations.

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Updated as of December 23 | Itinerary subject to change without notice.