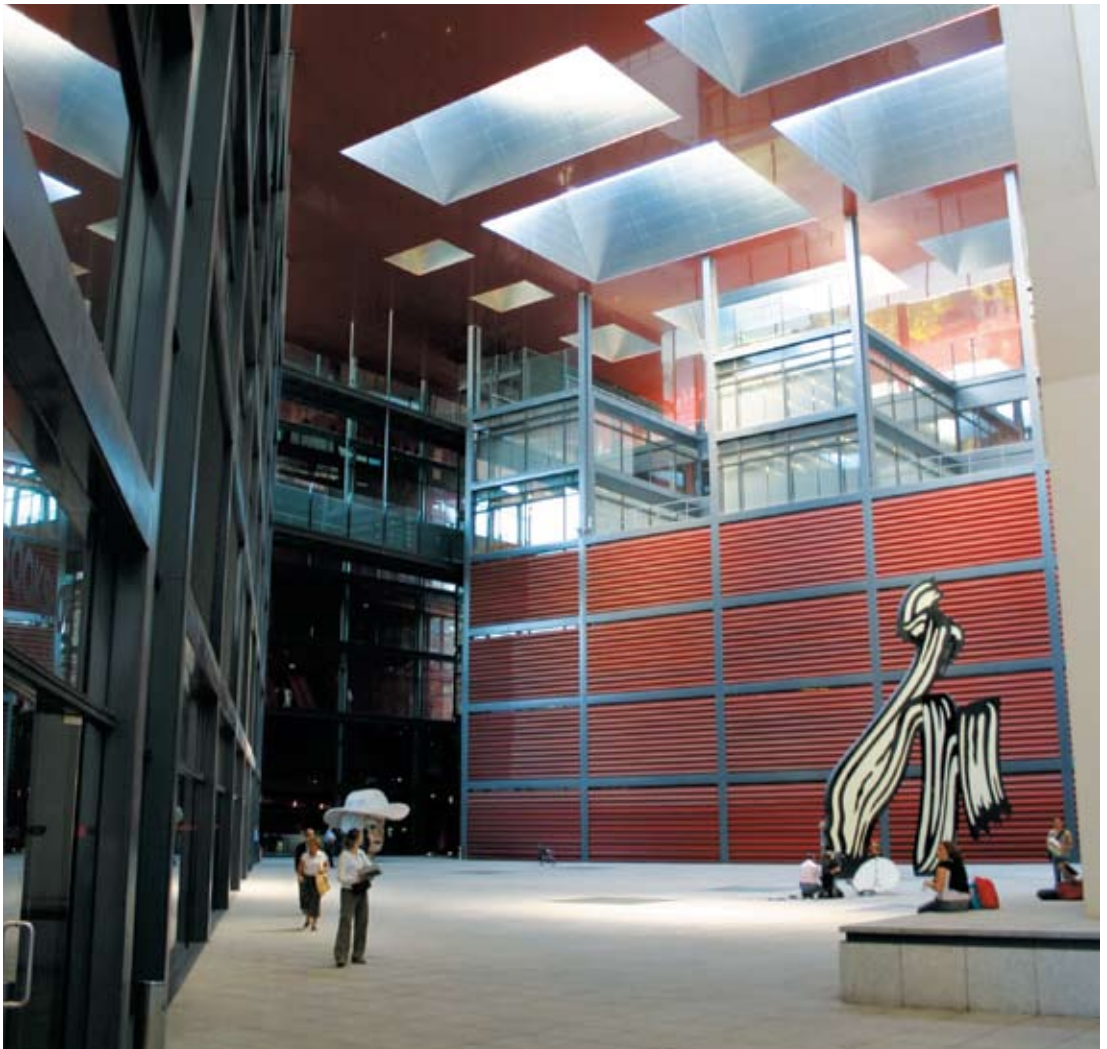


Madrid

Europe's Vanguard Business Destination

Madrid, Spain's vibrant and historic capital, has made its mark as a burgeoning business tourism destination on the European and global market. Where Madrid stands out is in its capacity to motivate its visitors to mix and match experiences. The city and its surrounding regions are a source of inspiration, both from a historic heritage point of view as well as an on a platform of visionary modern architecture. Combined with the natural harmony fostered with Spain's central plains and mountains, Madrid creates an invigorating environment not only for leisure tourism but also for all scales of conventions, congresses, and conferences. From diplomatic top summits and space industry conventions to fine art fairs, all walks of life are congregating on Europe's most diverse and fascinating metropolis.



Reina Sofia Museum

Business with a buzz



IFEMA

One could say that Madrid is a synonym for growth. Over the past decade it has had more than double the EU rate of growth, it has welcomed almost 1 million visitors more than the previous year (now around 8,3 million annually), and the city hosts more than 3,500 meetings annually with an average 800,000 participants. However, the most remarkable fact about Madrid is that it manages to maintain an open and welcoming environment, its well-known nightlife, cuisine, and culture not having lost any of its vitality, quality, or charm. This is no doubt due to the excellent infrastructure network, convenient connections being offered by the Community of Madrid's transit systems and the world's finest luxury hotels providing first class accommodation.

The growth outlook for Madrid points to a year-on-year increase of 4.0 percent, which makes Madrid one of the most dynamic and thriving cities in the European Union.

Particularly the increasing numbers of North American visitors enjoy Madrid's air of comfort and safety, another prime reason why major business conventions choose to host their international events in the city. This is complemented with an economic buzz of success, as the city contributes 17 percent to Spain's national GDP, set to grow to 18.5 percent by 2015. The growth outlook for the city of Madrid points to a year-on-year increase of 4.0 percent in 2007, which makes Madrid one of the most dynamic and thriving cities in the European Union. United States investment in Spain accounted for over 7.1 percent of GNP and over 303,000 direct and indirect jobs, which amounts to 2.21 percent of the total jobs in the private sector.

Needless to say Madrid is the main focus of US business interests, and so it is only logical for corporate leaders to convene at the heart of the Iberian Peninsula.

Summit superstructures

During the last four decades the Spanish tourism industry has grown to become the second biggest in the world. Madrid authorities were quick to respond to the growing numbers of arrivals and ordered the expansion of Barajas International Airport, the most important transport hub for Central Spain. Inaugurated in February 2006, the airport's hypermodern Terminal 4 was designed by Antonio Lamela and Richard Rogers, who won the 2006 Stirling Prize for their aesthetic, open and functional architecture. It is the world's largest single terminal area, with an area of 11 million square feet, carefully

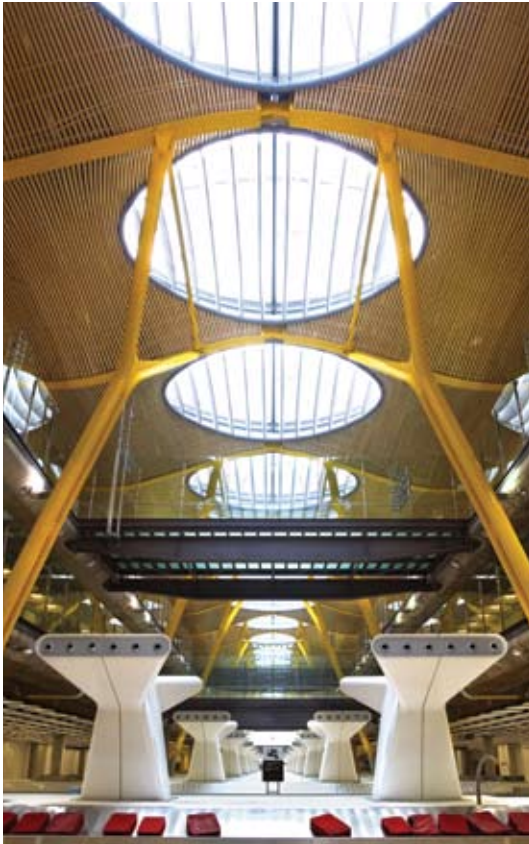
No less than 37,000 annual exhibitors on a total 1.3 million square meters of net exhibition space and four million visitors make up IFEMA's impressive microcosm.



Palacio de Congresos

designed to give passengers a stress-free start to their journey, whether arriving or departing. This is managed through careful use of illumination, available by glass panes instead of walls and numerous domes in the roof that allow natural light to pass through. Together with two more runways constructed to aid the flow of traffic, Barajas has the capacity of handling up to 70 million passengers annually, up from the 40 million it welcomes today. Metro line 8 connects the airport to the city center, and from 2009 a high-speed train link will transport passengers to and from Madrid's Atocha AVE station.

As surveys among international business travelers show, one of the capital's main advantages is its access to Latin America, Europe and North Africa. The historic ties with Latin America have strengthened considerably in the past two decades with the



Madrid Airport - Terminal 4

emergence of some major South American industries, including oil, gas, and biofuels. The airport couples this connection between three continents with Madrid's position as one of Europe's key logistical centers. Municipal and regional administrations have consistently built up state-of-the-art infrastructures to support this role, including world-class conference facilities. Located close to Barajas Airport is Madrid's largest convention center, the Palacio Municipal de Congresos, a vast custom-built complex covering 150.000 square meters in the Juan Carlos I Exhibition Center. It is home to IFEMA, the exemplary Madrid Trade Fair Institution run jointly by the city and regional governments along with the Cámara de Madrid (Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and Caja Madrid Savings Bank.

IFEMA has secured its position as a symbol of Madrid's business scene and an exponent of the economic vigor boasted by Spain and the region alike. A sharp upward trend, which has led the Institution to double its level of activity over the last five years, confirms its domestic leadership and its place amongst Europe's major players. No less than 37.000 annual exhibitors on a total 1.3 million square meters of net exhibition space and four million visitors make up IFEMA's impressive microcosm. These figures have raised the Institution's annual revenues to over \$176 million, shaping a framework of financial stability that ensures appropriate investment levels for all of the Institution's future projects. Its current expansion projects foresee an extra 50.000 square meters of exhibition area, modernized human transportation technologies and a new two-floor car park, a combined investment budget of \$98 million.

With a network of 36 branches worldwide, 10 of which work exclusively for the Institution, IFEMA is able to attract around half of the more than 80 trade fairs of its permanent calendar from abroad. Classics like the International Tourism Trade Fair FITUR, MOTORTEC, and the Madrid International Fashion Week, but also newcomers such as Casa Pasarela and the Design Fair for Home Trends all fall under the expert organization of IFEMA.

The hypermodern Terminal 4 at Barajas International Airport is the world's largest single terminal area, with an area of 11 million square feet, carefully designed to give passengers a stress-free start to their journey.

Another popular venue served by direct metro link with the airport is the centrally located Palacio de Congresos de Madrid. The 40.000 square meter center was built in 1964, and has thus celebrated over 30 years of events. Its most recognizable characteristic is the ceramic façade designed by the 20th century surrealist Joan Miró. The Palacio de Congresos premises, situated on the Paseo de la Castellana, offers 13 areas for meetings and conferences for up to 2.000 participants at a time. It is a favored option due to its proximity to Madrid's best hotels, restaurants and shopping districts.

This particular conference center has also enjoyed a healthy relationship with the sports world through its location opposite the famous Bernabeu Stadium, home of international soccer star David Beckham's team Real Madrid before he transferred to Los Angeles Galaxy. Soccer global governing body FIFA has hosted several events at the venue, and a congress participant can also combine business with pleasure by attending a match after hours, capturing the exhilarating atmosphere of a truly Madrilenian passion.

The third most significant conference facility is the Casa de Campo Exhibition Center. Spread over an area of 165 acres at only 5 minutes from the Plaza de España, the complex consists of five multi-purpose pavilions and one theatre offering 40.00 square meters of covered exhibition space. Of all these, the Glass Pavilion – or Pabellón de Cristal as it's known in Spanish - is perhaps the most noteworthy, both in terms of its capacity as its aesthetic appeal and location, offering spectacular views of Madrid and the Guadarrama mountain range to the northwest.

Living leisure

No matter how well organized a congress or exhibition is, a business traveler's main concern is to get a good night's rest to be fresh and rearing to get in another day of deals. Thankfully Madrid has upheld a high standard of hospitality, offering 56.000 beds, almost 30.000 of which are in four and five star accommodations. Hotels have also become an increasingly popular alternative for holding smaller meetings, as they offer ease of use, distance, and catering facilities, drastically lowering the logistical aspects of gatherings.

The range of styles, services and amenities on offer at

Madrid's many superb hotels may be a dizzying prospect when picking the place you may feel most at home. In this case, the Madrid Convention Bureau is at hand to assist you in making a selection that suits your needs best. Its task is to provide associations, groups and companies with everything they need, technically and institutionally, for their meeting or trip to be successful. Their assistance includes presenting candidacies, organizing inspection visits to Madrid, providing information on the city, facilitating contacts with the providers of the services, supporting the dissemination of the event and officially welcoming the participants. In all, everything required to stage a perfect event.

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Hotels near the Plaza Mayor have proven to be favorites among US visitors as they are very close to most of Madrid's major attractions. For a trendy buzz the Chueca area north of the Puerta del Sol (Sun's Gate) is a sure choice. Some high-end establishments even offer indulgences such as a private hot tub on your room's balcony. Around Santa Anna Plaza various stylish accommodations can be found providing true boutique comfort. Most major international hotel chains are present in Madrid, most with 300-plus rooms and among the city's top range of hospitality, not uncommonly offering a complementary bottle of champagne on arrival. Specialized convention hotels in Madrid are mostly located near the airport and IFEMA, all

offering meeting facilities of varying capacities, as well as most modern amenities as spas, fitness centers, and broadband Wi-fi Internet access.

Exploring Madrid is essential in even the shortest visit, as every corner reveals a new and exciting side of Spanish life.

Alternatively, the online hotel selector at the Community of Madrid's tourism portal also offers a concise overview of possibilities. The site, turismomadrid.es, is also geared to guide a prospective visitor to the city's leisure specialties, including museums, performing arts, gastronomy, and nightlife. This is where Madrid really comes alive, its Mediterranean culture of wining and dining in good company posting high on everyone's social agenda. Exploring Madrid is essential in even the shortest visit, as every corner reveals a new and exciting side of Spanish life. Strolling through the streets and avenues you can come across the lavish Royal Palace, the 16th-century Puerta del Sol marking the center of Spain, the old Moorish quarter of Moreria and much more. Art enthusiasts flock to the famous Prado, Thyssen-Bornemisza and Reina Sofia museums. After eating paella and tapas and watching flamenco, night owls can dance at clubs that are open until dawn. A very slick and up to date source of information of what not to miss is esmadrid.com, placing the essentials of lifestyle at your fingertips.

Getting familiar with Madrid

Madrid also offers an excellent opportunity for combining conventional engagements with family outings. If you're booked



The Castellana

for an appearance as keynote speaker at a major congress, why not bring your relatives over as well? Merge business with pleasure for a weekend with the wife and kids to collectively enjoy Madrid's many attractions. Madrilenian families enjoy boating in the emblematic Retiro Park. It was created in the 17th century as a rest place and leisure area restricted for only the monarchy. Today everyone can enjoy its gardens, lakes and terraces. During the weekends and school holidays, local artists put on theatre plays, puppet shows, storytelling sessions and juggling demonstrations. Visiting the Madrid Zoo and Aquarium in Casa de Campo is also a roaring experience. For High-tech thrills a trip to the spectacular IMAX 3D theatre and neighboring Planetarium is a must.

But sometimes the simple pleasures are the most memorable. This invariably involves great food, and a tour of the center's tapas bars is the de facto way of getting a taste of life in Madrid. Sampling and sharing small rations of anything from seafood, sliced meats (Jamón Serrano and chorizo), exquisite cheeses (Manchego, Idiazabel), spicy dips and of course delicious olives is a finger licking culinary treat that should not be missed. On Sunday's city folks flock to El Rastro, Madrid's metropolitan Flea Market, to hunt for bargain buys in every kind of product (or even animal) imaginable. If you want to brush up your bargaining and deal making skills, this is the place to do it,

Madrid's famous museums will have the hearts of art lovers beating at faster rates in the presence of their astonishing collections.

but you might need to buy a Spanish dictionary first.

Madrid's famous museums will have the hearts of art lovers beating at faster rates in the presence of their astonishing collections. The so-called Golden Triangle of Art located along the Paseo del Prado comprises the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, the Museo del Prado and the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza. The Reina Sofía Museum belongs to the world's most influential contemporary art institutions, especially since its €92 million (\$124 million) expansion designed by French architect Jean Nouvel. Besides works by Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró, the museum's undisputed centerpiece is Pablo Picasso's Guernica, his world-famous portrayal of human suffering at the hand of military violence, in particular the German bombing of Guernica in northern Spain in 1937. A tapestry copy donated by Nelson Rockefeller is displayed on the United Nations building in New York, at the entrance of the Security Council room.

The Prado features one of the world's finest collections of European art, from the 14th century through the early 19th century, including sculptures. The superb picture gallery consisting of 8,600 paintings lends the Museum its world-class status. Works by Spain's Diego Velázquez and Francisco Goya grace its halls, as well as of Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch (a personal favorite of King Philip II). The Thyssen-Bornemisza, which started as a private collection in 1920 by the late Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza, fills the historical gaps in its counterparts' collections. This includes fine examples of Italian primitives (Duccio) and works from the English, Dutch (Rembrandt), and German (Dürer) schools, while also covering impressionists (Monet and Renoir), expressionists such as Vincent van Gogh, and European and American paintings from the second half of the 20th century.



Aranjuez Palace gardens

Provincial inspiration

If you are a lover of 20th century classical guitar music, chances are Joaquín Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* belongs to your favorite compositions. The timeless masterpiece evokes the ultimate atmosphere of a regal, sun-blessed Spanish region, inspired in fact by the lush gardens of the Palacio Real de Aranjuez in the province of Madrid. Rodrigo himself described the concerto as capturing "the fragrance of magnolias, the singing of birds and the gushing of fountains" in the gardens of Aranjuez. A number of musicians have since reinterpreted the work, including jazz legend Miles Davis in the company of arranger Gil Evans. On the album *Sketches of Spain* (1960), Davis says: "That melody is so strong that the softer you play it, the stronger it gets, and the stronger you play it, the weaker it gets". It is a message heeded by the best marketing and design agencies, which know that less is more in today's loud and crowded world. A visit to the serene royal and World Heritage site immortalized by Rodrigo's movements is highly recommended, and at just 30 miles south of Madrid easily incorporated in a multi-night convention trip.

The timeless masterpiece *Concierto de Aranjuez* evokes the ultimate atmosphere of a regal, sun-blessed Spanish region, inspired by the lush gardens of the Palacio Real de Aranjuez.

Should the gardens also inspire your personal artistic or corporate creativity, all the better. If not, you may try your luck at the Casino de Aranjuez instead. Opened in July 2005, the Gran Casino Aranjuez was made to impress and is one of the largest and most advanced buildings of its type. The two restaurants Nautilus and La Vega, the Café Teatro, five cocktail bars, conference rooms, a large event room for 2,000 people, two discotheques and three gaming rooms provide the ideal environment for pure enjoyment. The Sala de Juego offers everything from American and French roulette to poker and Black Jack. The Sala Privada de Juego offers a more intimate atmosphere. In the Maquinas de Azar 150 slot machines invite visitors to try their luck. The latest that design and technology can offer has been implemented to perfection to add to the feeling of enjoyment throughout the facilities.

Of a far more monastic nature, but no less impressive, is the historical territory of El Escorial. Situated next to Mount Abantos in the Sierra de Guadarrama, the monumental 16th century complex was commissioned by King Phillip II to commemorate the victory at the Battle of St. Quentin in 1557 over the troops of Henry II, King of France. Serving as a "perpetual home for the Catholic Crown of Spain", El Escorial is today an Augustinian monastery, and home to an enormous collection of art as well as priceless ancient manuscripts in its library. A popular tourist attraction for daytrips from Madrid, El Escorial also offers the possibility of hosting conferences within its awe-inspiring architecture.

In fact the whole region around Madrid is a source of inspiration when it comes to historic architecture. The famous main square in the town of Chinchón is the greatest cultural asset of the Comarca de Las Vegas, the original Las Vegas county southeast of Madrid. The medieval heart of the town is considered to be one of the most beautiful squares in the world because of



Manzanares Castle

its architectural balance and proportions, with a collection of three-story buildings featuring lintelled galleries and 234 wooden balconies, called "windows". Numerous activities have been held in Chinchón's square, from royal festivals, proclamations, traveling theater groups, games, bullfights, Eucharistic plays, political and military acts, to entire cinema sets. To visit Chinchón is to lose oneself in its streets and squares, contemplating its unique manor houses and buildings with popular architecture, stopping only to refuel in taverns and eateries.

Madrid's surrounding areas are rich with heritage. 18 miles northeast of the capital lays Alcalá de Henares, whose ancient foundations go back to 1 BC when it became the only Roman town in the Madrid region. Known then by its Latin name of Complutum, lending its name to the 16th century Complutensian Polyglot Bible, the town fell in decline after the Roman Empire withered, but was later taken up by the Moors, who built an al-qalat (castle) on a nearby hill, today's Alcalá la Vieja (Old Alcalá). Spain's revered author Miguel de Cervantes, creator of *Don Quixote*, was born in Alcalá de Henares, and the city celebrates this event by organizing an annual Cervantes Festival on the 9th of October. The city is also the setting of the ALCINE film festival,

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one of the oldest events of the Spanish film industry, its short film competition having given rise to many gifted cinematographers.

There is such a wealth of things to see and do in and around Madrid that a weekend extension to any business trip is probably the best chance of catching some authentic Spanish spirit. A hot tip is the trend that many visitors prefer turning their stay into a mini vacation, so you might just want to apply for those extra days off from work. 8 million visitors per year can't be mistaken; it will be worth every minute.

Madrid online

www.tourspain.info

www.turismomadrid.es

www.esmadrid.es

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