NO-GUIRIS



MADRID

Eat, wander & speak Spanish

Your Madrid gift · Monica Bernabe

QBlanBla

HOLA, MADRID

Madrid is your language gym.

Hi, I'm Monica, your amiga from Madrid. I like a city with stories, strange little habits and people who can turn a quick coffee into a full conversation. That's the Madrid I want to share with you.

Guiri is a colloquial word for a foreign visitor, especially a tourist. Here it is affectionate. You can be a guiri and still have a very good conversation.

You've got the book. Now you've got the city. This gift is where the Spanish from How to Speak Spanish with a Narco, a Philosopher and a Human leaves the page and orders breakfast, asks a question and maybe makes an amigo. You don't have to finish the book before you start.

You can spend your whole trip taking photographs and pointing at menus. Fair enough. But try adding one question. One little **¿Qué me recomiendas?** Suddenly someone is telling you about their favourite tortilla, and your Madrid has people in it.

You don't need perfect Spanish to have a real moment. You need a few useful words, a reason to use them and the courage to say hola.

HOW TO USE YOUR GIFT

Pick a stop. Read the sample conversation out loud. Choose one line you actually need. Say it to someone, listen to the answer and use it again somewhere else. Spanglish is allowed. Pointing is allowed. Reading from this guide is absolutely allowed.

These are imagined practice dialogues, not recordings or promises about what staff will say. Real people will surprise you. That's why each stop includes a possible extra reply and a way to keep going.

Start with the route pages (pp. 19-20), or jump straight to whatever you fancy. All map links are clickable. Opening hours, prices and availability can change: check the linked official pages before you go.

QUICK FIND: Survival phrases p. 3 · Getting around p. 4 · Food pp. 5-8 · Markets & barrios pp. 9-14 · Parks pp. 15-16 · Culture & shopping pp. 17-18 · Routes pp. 19-20 · Rescue phrases p. 21.

SPEAK SPANISH

Eight phrases.
A whole city.

Your book gives you survival vocabulary. Here is your pocket version. Keep these words close enough to use, not hidden in a notebook back at the hotel.

Hola. Estoy aprendiendo español.
Hello. I'm learning Spanish.

Quiero esto, por favor.
I want this, please.

¿Tienes…? / ¿Tiene…?
Do you have…? Informal / polite singular.

¿Cuánto cuesta?
How much does it cost?

¿Dónde está…?
Where is…?

No entiendo. ¿Puedes repetir?
I don't understand. Can you repeat?

Un poco más despacio, por favor.
A little more slowly, please.

Gracias. ¡Hasta luego!
Thank you. See you!

One useful upgrade: ¿Me pones…? means 'Can I have…?' at a bar or café. **¿Me pones un café?** is a very natural way to order. **Quiero un café, por favor** works too.

The repeat trick: say ¿Cuánto cuesta? at breakfast, at a market and at a shop. Same words, three people, three answers. That is Chapter 13 in real life.

Tú or usted? You'll hear informal language often. This guide mostly uses it. For a polite alternative, swap **¿Puedes…?** for **¿Puede…?** You do not need to solve the entire grammar system before you buy a croqueta.

Book link: Chapter 7, printed pp. 47-49; Chapter 13, printed pp. 76-80. The PDF viewer counts the cover, so its page number is one higher.

GETTING AROUND

Lost? Good.
Ask someone.

Google Maps knows the route. A person can tell you which corner you've completely misunderstood. Start with perdona and give them one clear destination.

In the centre, group nearby stops and walk when it suits you. For longer hops, use the Metro and check the current journey planner. At a station, read the line number and the final destination on the platform signs. The direction matters as much as the line.

Perdona, ¿dónde está el metro?
Excuse me, where is the Metro?

Todo recto y luego a la derecha.
Straight ahead, then right.

¿Está lejos?
Is it far?

No, está cerca.
No, it's nearby.

Gracias. ¿Puedes señalarlo en el mapa?
Thanks. Can you point to it on the map?

AT THE STATION

Voy a Sol. ¿Qué billete necesito? / I'm going to Sol. Which ticket do I need?
¿Tengo que hacer transbordo? / Do I need to change trains?
¿Esta línea va hacia...? / Does this line go towards...?
¿Hay ascensor? / Is there a lift?

Listen for: izquierda / left; derecha / right; recto / straight; salida / exit; entrada / entrance; transbordo / change. **La siguiente** means the next one - useful for stations and streets.

Your tiny mission: ask one real direction question. If the answer gets complicated: Perdona, no entiendo. ¿Aquí o allí? / Sorry, I don't understand. Here or there?

Metro Madrid: plan your journey and check tickets

Book link: Chapter 7, directions and transport, printed pp. 48-49. No ticket prices are fixed in this guide.

EAT

Breakfast with a chocolate moustache.

Madrid has many sensible breakfast options. Today, we're choosing chocolate and fried dough. Your Spanish can be imperfect; your servilleta will be essential.

Go here: Chocolatería San Ginés, Pasadizo de San Ginés, 5. Near Sol and Plaza Mayor.

Order chocolate con churros, or ask for porras: a thicker kind of fried dough. The chocolate is for dipping, though nobody is grading your technique. Check the ordering system when you arrive; a queue may be for ordering rather than a table.

YOUR CONVERSATION

Hola, ¿se pide aquí?
Hello, do I order here?

Sí. ¿Qué quieres?
Yes. What would you like?

Un chocolate con churros, por favor.
A hot chocolate with churros, please.

¿Para tomar aquí o para llevar?
To have here or to take away?

Para tomar aquí. ¿Cuánto cuesta?
To have here. How much is it?

You might also hear: ¿Algo más? / Anything else? Say **No, gracias**, or add **Y un café con leche** / And a coffee with milk.

Words to take with you: desayuno / breakfast; tengo hambre / I'm hungry; aquí / here; churros; porras.

Your tiny mission: Order without pointing first. If you get stuck, point and say Quiero esto, por favor. You still ordered in Spanish.

Back to the book: Chapter 7, survival vocabulary (printed pp. 47-49).

Find this stop on the map

EAT

A croqueta near Sol.
Yes, that counts.

You don’t have to deliver a speech to practise Spanish. Sometimes the entire conversation is about a croqueta. A perfectly respectable subject.

Go here: Casa Labra, Calle de Tetuán, 12. Near Puerta del Sol.

This old taberna is known for bacalao: salt cod. Try a croqueta de bacalao or ask about a tajada, a piece of battered cod. Before joining a line, ask where food and drinks are ordered; the system can be different from a sit-down restaurant.

YOUR CONVERSATION

Hola, ¿aquí se piden las croquetas?
Hello, do I order croquettes here?

Sí. ¿Cuántas quieres?
Yes. How many would you like?

Dos de bacalao, por favor.
Two salt-cod ones, please.

¿Algo de beber?
Anything to drink?

Agua, por favor. ¿Cuánto es en total?
Water, please. How much is it altogether?

You might also hear: ¿Con gas o sin gas? / Sparkling or still? Answer **Sin gas, por favor** for still water.

Words to take with you: dos / two; agua / water; comer / eat; beber / drink; bacalao / salt cod.

Your tiny mission: Ask a small extra question: ¿Qué es una tajada? / What is a tajada? Listen for bacalao; you already know that word.

Back to the book: Chapter 7, survival vocabulary (printed pp. 47-49).

Find this stop on the map

EAT

The tortilla conversation.

A tortilla española is an omelette made with potatoes. It can also start a surprisingly passionate conversation about onion. Spain has opinions. Many opiniones.

Go here: Bodega de la Ardosa, Calle de Colón, 13. Malasaña.

Come for tortilla and a traditional taberna atmosphere. Check what's available before ordering. A pincho is a portion; a ración is a larger serving, often for sharing. If you fancy vermut, ask whether they have it de grifo - on tap. Alcohol is entirely optional; the Spanish works with water too.

YOUR CONVERSATION

Hola, ¿tenéis tortilla?
Hello, do you have tortilla?

Sí, tenemos.
Yes, we do.

Un pincho, por favor. ¿Lleva cebolla?
One portion, please. Does it have onion?

Sí, lleva cebolla.
Yes, it has onion.

Vale. Y agua, por favor.
Okay. And water, please.

You might also hear: Ahora no queda / There's none left right now. Try **Entonces, ¿qué me recomiendas?** / Then what do you recommend?

Words to take with you: tengo hambre / I'm hungry; me gusta / I like it; rico / tasty; cebolla / onion; pincho / portion.

Your tiny mission: Tell your companion Me gusta la tortilla con cebolla or sin cebolla. Ask ¿Y a ti? / And you?

Back to the book: Chapter 7, survival vocabulary (printed pp. 47-49).

Find this stop on the map

EAT

Tapas. Noise.
One useful question.

A busy bar can sound like five conversations and a football match happening inside your head. You only need to catch your own conversation. Un poco más despacio, por favor.

Go here: Sidrería El Tigre, Calle de las Infantas, 30. Chueca.

El Tigre is known for generous tapas with drinks. Ask what is included with your order instead of assuming every drink comes with unlimited food. At a crowded barra, catch the server's eye and wait your turn. Loud room, normal manners. And yes, use a bin for your servilleta.

YOUR CONVERSATION

Hola, ¿la bebida incluye tapa?
Hello, does the drink include a tapa?

Sí, con esta bebida.
Yes, with this drink.

Vale. Una caña, por favor.
Okay. A small beer, please.

¿Una o dos?
One or two?

Una. ¿Cuánto es?
One. How much is it?

You might also hear: ¿Qué os pongo? / What can I get you all? Non-alcoholic swap: **Un refresco, por favor. ¿Incluye tapa?**

Words to take with you: caña / small draft beer; tapa / small bite; barra / counter; refresco / soft drink; gracias / thank you.

Your tiny mission: Ask what comes with the drink before ordering. Later use La cuenta, por favor / The bill, please.

Back to the book: Chapter 7, survival vocabulary (printed pp. 47-49).

Find this stop on the map

MARKETS

A market is a conversation buffet.

You can look at everything, buy a little something and ask what it is. Curiosity is very useful Spanish. Also useful: deciding your budget before hunger makes your financial decisions.

Go here: Mercado de San Miguel, Plaza de San Miguel, 1; or Mercado de Antón Martín, Calle de Santa Isabel, 5.

San Miguel is a central food stop beside Plaza Mayor. Antón Martín mixes food shopping with places to eat. Choose the one near your route; you don't need both today. Check the price and portion at each stall, and whether you pay there. In a queue, ask **¿Quién es el último?** / Who's last?

YOUR CONVERSATION

Hola, ¿qué es esto?
Hello, what is this?

Es queso de oveja.
It's sheep's cheese.

¿Cuánto cuesta una porción?
How much is one portion?

Son seis euros.
It's six euros.

Vale, una porción, por favor.
Okay, one portion, please.

You might also hear: El precio es por cien gramos / The price is per 100 grams. Ask **¿Cuánto cuesta este trozo?** / How much is this piece? The sample price is invented for practice.

Words to take with you: esto / this; mercado / market; queso / cheese; caro / expensive; barato / cheap.

Your tiny mission: Ask about one thing you don't recognise. You're allowed to reply Gracias, solo estoy mirando / Thanks, I'm just looking.

Back to the book: Chapter 7, survival vocabulary (printed pp. 47-49).

Find this stop on the map

Map: Mercado de San Miguel

SHOPPING

You came for a walk.
You bought a lamp.

Welcome to El Rastro, where ‘I don’t need anything’ can become ‘Does this fit in my suitcase?’ Your new treasure comes with free Spanish practice. The treasure itself is not free.

Go here: El Rastro: start at Plaza de Cascorro and walk along Ribera de Curtidores. Metro: La Latina or Embajadores.

The outdoor market takes place on Sundays and public holidays, normally 09:00-15:00. Go earlier for a less crowded browse. Bring a payment option the seller accepts, keep your belongings close and ask before handling delicate objects. Bargaining may be possible at some stalls; a polite no is also an answer.

YOUR CONVERSATION

Hola, ¿cuánto cuesta este libro?
Hello, how much is this book?

Diez euros.
Ten euros.

¿Me lo dejas en ocho?
Would you let me have it for eight?

No, el precio es diez.
No, the price is ten.

Vale, gracias. Voy a pensarlo.
Okay, thanks. I’ll think about it.

You might also hear: Solo efectivo / Cash only. **¿Se puede pagar con tarjeta?** / Can I pay by card? The amounts above are sample prices.

Words to take with you: libro / book; dinero / money; tienda / shop; quiero / I want; no quiero / I don’t want.

Your tiny mission: Ask the price of something you genuinely like. Buying it is optional. Negotiating is optional. Saying the question is the win.

Back to the book: Chapter 7, survival vocabulary (printed pp. 47-49).

Find this stop on the map

COOL BARRIOS

La Latina: let’s share something.

After a walk through El Rastro, La Latina is temptingly close. This is where you discover that sharing food requires words. Very convenient for us.

Go here: Cava Baja for tabernas; Plaza de la Paja for another neighbourhood stroll. Metro: La Latina.

Choose a bar whose menu and prices suit you. If you want a seated meal, check whether there’s a table and whether you need to wait. A tapa, a media ración and a ración are not necessarily the same size. Ask what works for your group before ordering four enormous plates.

YOUR CONVERSATION

Hola, ¿tenéis una mesa para dos?
Hello, do you have a table for two?

Sí, dentro.
Yes, inside.

¿Qué nos recomiendas para compartir?
What do you recommend for us to share?

Una ración de croquetas.
A serving of croquettes.

Perfecto. ¿Y una ensalada?
Perfect. And a salad?

You might also hear: Está todo reservado / Everything is reserved. Try **¿Podemos tomar algo en la barra?** / Can we have something at the counter?

Words to take with you: comida / food; amigo / friend; nosotros / we; dentro / inside; compartir / share.

Your tiny mission: Ask your companion ¿Qué quieres comer? / What do you want to eat? Agree on one plate in Spanish.

Back to the book: Chapter 7, survival vocabulary (printed pp. 47-49).

Find this stop on the map

COOL BARRIOS

Malasaña:
a coffee with character.

Vintage shops, music and little streets: Malasaña gives you plenty to notice. You can make a conversation out of something you actually like. No fascinating personality transplant required.

Go here: Plaza del Dos de Mayo and the surrounding streets. Night-time option: La Vía Láctea, Calle de Velarde, 18.

Use the plaza as your starting point and choose a café nearby. La Vía Láctea is a music-bar option linked to the neighbourhood's Movida era; check opening times if you want to go later. For now, practise a café order and one opinion. You can like the music even if you don't know who's singing.

YOUR CONVERSATION

Hola, un café con leche, por favor.
Hello, a coffee with milk, please.

¿Aquí o para llevar?
Here or to take away?

Aquí. Me gusta esta música.
Here. I like this music.

Es un grupo español.
It's a Spanish band.

¿Cómo se llama?
What's it called?

You might also hear: No sé / I don't know. Smile and say **Voy a buscarlo** / I'll look it up. Nobody has failed the conversation.

Words to take with you: me gusta / I like; café / coffee; música / music; nombre / name; aquí / here.

Your tiny mission: Notice something you like and say it out loud: Me gusta esta tienda / esta plaza / esta canción.

Back to the book: Chapter 6, music and useful language; Chapter 7, food and personal information.

Find this stop on the map

COOL BARRIOS

Chueca:
hello comes before flirting.

You might make a friend. You might just ask whether a chair is free. Both are real conversations. Let's start with the chair and see what happens.

Go here: Plaza de Chueca and nearby cafés or terraces. Metro: Chueca.

Chueca is a neighbourhood strongly associated with Madrid's LGBTQ+ life. Choose a terrace you like and ask before taking a seat. A friendly exchange can stay friendly; it doesn't need to become a grand romantic proyecto. If someone is busy or gives a short answer, let them enjoy their afternoon.

YOUR CONVERSATION

Perdona, ¿está libre esta silla?
Excuse me, is this chair free?

Sí, claro.
Yes, of course.

Gracias. Soy de Australia. ¿Tú eres de Madrid?
Thanks. I'm from Australia. Are you from Madrid?

Sí. ¿Estás de vacaciones?
Yes. Are you on holiday?

Sí, y estoy aprendiendo español.
Yes, and I'm learning Spanish.

You might also hear: No, está ocupada / No, it's taken. Say **Ah, perdona. Gracias** and find another chair. Swap Australia for your own country.

Words to take with you: soy de / I'm from; hablo / I speak; amigo / friend; sí / yes; no / no.

Your tiny mission: If a conversation develops, ask ¿Qué te gusta de Madrid? / What do you like about Madrid? One answer is plenty.

Back to the book: Chapter 7, survival vocabulary (printed pp. 47-49).

Find this stop on the map

COOL BARRIOS

Lavapiés:
Madrid has many flavours.

You don't have to eat Spanish food every time you speak Spanish. In Lavapiés, your conversation might involve ingredients from somewhere entirely different. Madrid is like that.

Go here: Mercado de San Fernando, Calle de Embajadores, 41. Metro: Lavapiés or Embajadores.

Browse the market and choose an open food stall that interests you. Fresh-food counters and places to eat may keep different hours. Ask what's in a dish rather than guessing from its appearance. If an allergy matters, name it clearly and ask the staff to check ingredients and cross-contact; a phrase in a guide cannot make a dish safe.

YOUR CONVERSATION

Hola, ¿qué lleva este plato?
Hello, what's in this dish?

Arroz, verduras y pollo.
Rice, vegetables and chicken.

¿Tenéis algo sin carne?
Do you have anything without meat?

Sí, este lleva solo verduras.
Yes, this one has only vegetables.

Vale, quiero ese, por favor.
Okay, I want that one, please.

You might also hear: ¿Lo quieres picante? / Would you like it spicy? Say **No muy picante, por favor** / Not very spicy, please.

Words to take with you: comer / eat; quiero / I want; eso / that; carne / meat; verduras / vegetables.

Your tiny mission: Ask what's in one dish. Useful extra: Soy vegetariano / vegetariana / I'm vegetarian.

Back to the book: Chapter 7, survival vocabulary (printed pp. 47-49).

Find this stop on the map

PARKS & CHILL

El Retiro:
slow down, speak up.

El Retiro is a good place to stop rushing. Find some shade, look around and use your Spanish for something other than paying. Your brain gets a paseo too.

Go here: Parque de El Retiro: start at Puerta de Alcalá and head towards the Estanque Grande. Metro: Retiro.

Make the main pond your first landmark. Walk, sit or check boat hire if it interests you; conditions and booking can change. The Palacio de Cristal is closed for architectural works at this guide's check date. Use the pond, paths and gardens as your plan rather than relying on entering the palace. Park access can also change during weather alerts.

YOUR CONVERSATION

Perdona, ¿dónde está el estanque?
Excuse me, where is the pond?

Por allí, todo recto.
Over there, straight ahead.

¿Está cerca?
Is it nearby?

Sí, a unos minutos.
Yes, a few minutes away.

Gracias. Hace un día precioso.
Thanks. It's a lovely day.

You might also hear: Está cerrado / It's closed. Ask **¿Por dónde puedo ir?** / Which way can I go?

Words to take with you: cerca / near; lejos / far; allí / there; paseo / walk; tranquilo / peaceful.

Your tiny mission: Ask a direction before checking your phone. With your companion: Estoy cansado / cansada. ¿Nos sentamos? / I'm tired. Shall we sit?

Back to the book: Chapter 7, survival vocabulary (printed pp. 47-49).

Find this stop on the map

PARKS & CHILL

Madrid Río:
a walk and a what-is-that?

You've eaten. You've walked. You've eaten again. Madrid Río is a good excuse to change the scenery, and Matadero gives you a fresh thing to ask about.

Go here: Madrid Río by Puente de Arganzuela; Matadero Madrid, Paseo de la Chopera, 14. Metro: Legazpi for Matadero.

Choose a stretch of the riverside path, then visit Matadero if its programme appeals. This former slaughterhouse is now a cultural space. Access to the grounds and admission to individual activities are different things: check the event, price and booking needs. Don't expect every exhibition to be open just because the courtyard is.

YOUR CONVERSATION

Hola, ¿qué hay hoy?
Hello, what's on today?

Hay una exposición.
There's an exhibition.

¿La entrada es gratis?
Is admission free?

Para esta exposición, sí.
For this exhibition, yes.

¿Dónde está la entrada?
Where is the entrance?

You might also hear: Hay que reservar / You need to book. Ask **¿Cómo puedo reservar?** / How can I book? This sample does not promise free admission.

Words to take with you: hoy / today; ahora / now; más tarde / later; dónde / where; entrada / entrance or ticket.

Your tiny mission: Ask about one actual activity. If nothing suits you: Gracias. Voy a dar un paseo / Thanks. I'm going for a walk.

Back to the book: Chapter 7, survival vocabulary (printed pp. 47-49).

Find this stop on the map

CULTURE

The Prado: you’re allowed an opinion.

You don’t need a degree to look at a painting. You don’t need advanced Spanish to say what you think about it either. ‘Me gusta’ is a perfectly good start.

Go here: Museo Nacional del Prado, on Paseo del Prado. Check your ticket for the entrance you should use.

Buy or check admission through the official museum site. Choose a small number of works so the visit stays enjoyable. Ask the information staff for the current location of Las meninas rather than relying on a fixed room number. Save your conversation for a quiet voice with your companion; other visitors are looking too.

YOUR CONVERSATION

Hola, ¿dónde puedo ver Las meninas?
Hello, where can I see Las meninas?

Aquí, en este plano.
Here, on this map.

Gracias. ¿Tenéis un plano en inglés?
Thanks. Do you have a map in English?

Sí, aquí tienes.
Yes, here you go.

Perfecto, gracias.
Perfect, thank you.

You might also hear: Esa sala está cerrada / That room is closed. Ask **¿Qué me recomiendas ver?** / What do you recommend I see?

Words to take with you: me gusta / I like; no me gusta / I don’t like; aquí / here; grande / big; pequeño / small.

Your tiny mission: Tell your companion Me gusta este cuadro porque… / I like this painting because… Add one reason, even in Spanglish.

Back to the book: Chapter 7, survival phrases; Chapter 10, speaking without getting trapped by mistakes.

Find this stop on the map

SHOPPING

Gran Vía:
less pointing, more asking.

Bright signs, theatres and shops: Gran Vía can turn ‘a quick look’ into an afternoon. Let’s make at least one of those looks useful for your Spanish.

Go here: Gran Vía and the nearby Callao area. Metro: Gran Vía or Callao.

Choose a shop you actually want to browse. Ask for a colour or size and check where the fitting rooms are. If you want a musical or other performance later, check the specific theatre’s official booking page; the language and schedule vary. You can enjoy the street without buying anything at all.

YOUR CONVERSATION

Hola, ¿tenéis esta camiseta en azul?
Hello, do you have this T-shirt in blue?

Sí. ¿Qué talla quieres?
Yes. What size would you like?

La mediana. ¿Puedo probármela?
Medium. Can I try it on?

Sí, los probadores están al fondo.
Yes, the fitting rooms are at the back.

Gracias. ¿Cuánto cuesta?
Thank you. How much is it?

You might also hear: No queda esa talla / That size is out of stock. Say **Gracias, voy a mirar otra cosa** / Thanks, I’ll look at something else.

Words to take with you: tienda / shop; cuesta / costs; barato / cheap; caro / expensive; talla / size.

Your tiny mission: Ask about something you genuinely want to know. No need to buy a camiseta just to complete your homework.

Back to the book: Chapter 7, survival vocabulary (printed pp. 47-49).

Find this stop on the map

MADRID WALKS

One day.
Three conversations.

A central walk with food, streets and enough time to enjoy them. The timings below are rough planning estimates for walking, not live navigation. Add your own café time.

MORNING: SOL + BREAKFAST

Start at Sol. Walk to San Ginés for chocolate and churros (about 5-10 minutes). **Your line: ¿Se pide aquí?** Then stroll to Plaza Mayor (about 5 minutes). Look up from the phone. You're in Madrid, cariño.

LATE MORNING: SOMETHING TO TASTE

Walk to Casa Labra near Sol for a small bacalao stop (roughly 10 minutes from Plaza Mayor). **Your line: Dos de bacalao, por favor.** If you'd rather browse food stalls, choose San Miguel beside Plaza Mayor instead. One food stop is enough; hunger is your itinerary editor.

AFTERNOON: LA LATINA

From Plaza Mayor, head to Cava Baja (about 5-10 minutes). Choose lunch, a drink or a neighbourhood walk. **Your line: ¿Qué nos recomiendas para compartir?** Wander towards Plaza de la Paja when you're ready.

LATER: YOUR CHOICE

Callao and Gran Vía are a possible late-afternoon stroll, roughly 20-30 minutes on foot from La Latina depending on your start. Or stop. A good trip does not require twelve attractions and a blister.

Your three wins: ask where to order; order something; ask for a recommendation. Repeat gracias as often as you like.

Open the central walk in Google Maps

Read the stop pages before setting off. Check current opening times and adapt the order if needed. This is a flexible day, not a booked tour.

MADRID WALKS

A Sunday treasure hunt.
A greener afternoon.

Choose the route that fits your visit. Each one reuses the same small set of words. The repetition is the point, even when your destination changes.

SUNDAY OR PUBLIC HOLIDAY: RASTRO + LA LATINA

Start at Plaza de Cascorro during the outdoor market's usual morning hours. Walk down Ribera de Curtidores and browse side streets that interest you. Allow about 1-2 hours if you like shopping. Ask **¿Cuánto cuesta?**, hear a price and decide whether you want it.

Walk back towards La Latina for lunch; from Cascorro to Cava Baja is roughly 10-15 minutes. Ask **¿Tenéis una mesa para dos?** Change **dos** to your group size. End at Plaza de la Paja or head home with the lamp you swore you didn't need.

Map: Rastro to La Latina

ANY SUITABLE DAY: PRADO + RETIRO

Choose a manageable Prado visit, perhaps 1-2 hours depending on your interest. Then walk to the Retiro pond: allow roughly 20-30 minutes, depending on your museum exit and park entrance. Ask **¿Dónde está el estanque?** Find a bench. Talk about what you liked.

Want a different landscape? Make Madrid Río and Matadero a separate outing, using Legazpi as a useful Metro starting point. They are not next door to the Prado. Check travel and the current cultural programme first.

Map: Prado to the Retiro pond

If you have another evening: Malasaña and Chueca sit close enough for a neighbourhood wander. Start with a café, ask about the music and see where your curiosity takes you.

SPANISH SOS

When your brain goes blank.

You walk in, the server says something, and every Spanish word you've ever known leaves the building. Normal. Use one of these and give your brain a minute.

Perdona, no entiendo.
Sorry, I don't understand.

¿Puedes repetir más despacio?
Can you repeat more slowly?

¿Puedes escribirlo?
Can you write it down?

¿Qué significa esa palabra?
What does that word mean?

¿Cómo se dice esto en español?
How do you say this in Spanish?

Quiero esto.
I want this.

¿Cuánto es en total?
How much is it altogether?

¿Se puede pagar con tarjeta?
Can I pay by card?

¿Dónde está el baño?
Where is the toilet?

No, gracias. Tengo que irme.
No, thanks. I have to go.

If someone switches to English: ¿Podemos hablar un poquito en español? Estoy practicando. / Can we speak a little Spanish? I'm practising. If they're rushed, keep the interaction easy and try again somewhere else.

Hear a number, then confirm it: ¿Seis euros? / Six euros? Or ask them to show you the price. You don't have to pretend you understood.

Book link: Chapter 10, Error, error. A mistake is a moment to repair the conversation, not a reason to stop speaking.

YOUR SPANISH

Three days.
A little more Spanish.

Don't collect fifty new words you never use. Take one useful word from a real moment and bring it back into another conversation. Your trip gives it a face and a place.

DAY 1 / QUIERO

Quiero un café. I want a coffee.
Quiero esto. I want this.
No quiero una bolsa, gracias. I don't want a bag, thanks.
Use quiero in two different places. Change the thing, keep the phrase.

DAY 2 / ¿TIENES?

¿Tienes agua? Do you have water?
¿Tenéis una mesa? Do you have a table? (Addressing the staff as a group.)
¿Tiene un plano? Do you have a map? (Polite singular.)
You'll hear these different forms. Choose one and start.

DAY 3 / ME GUSTA

Me gusta Madrid. I like Madrid.
Me gusta esta música. I like this music.
Me gusta este barrio. ¿Y a ti? I like this neighbourhood. And you?
Now you're expressing something about yourself, not just ordering.

Write or record a tiny story at the end of the day: Estoy en Madrid. Hoy como tortilla. Me gusta. Hablo un poco de español. / I'm in Madrid. Today I eat tortilla. I like it. I speak a little Spanish.

Keep your own three:

A word I heard: _____
What it means: _____
Where I can use it again: _____

Book link: Chapter 13, repeated phrases in meaningful situations. The extra place-specific words in this guide help you use the book's core phrases in the city.

HASTA LUEGO

Take a story home.
Not just a souvenir.

A souvenir can remind you of Madrid. A conversation can remind you of the person who helped you find the pond, explained a dish or told you the name of a song. I'd like you to leave with both.

Maybe your first order is tiny. Maybe your first question comes out half in English. Maybe the waiter replies so fast that you catch exactly one word. Use that word. Ask again. Smile if you feel like it. This is how the Spanish you already know starts becoming Spanish you can use.

And if your most memorable moment is a very serious discussion about cebolla, welcome. You have successfully taken part in Spanish culture. The onion committee will be in touch.

Your Madrid challenge: one question, one answer you understand and one phrase you use again. Repeat tomorrow. No perfect accent required.

KEEP SPEAKING WITH ME

If you want more stories, conversation and Spanish for real life, visit BlanBla. You can find out about lessons and keep practising after the trip. Your learning doesn't have to end at the airport.

Visit BlanBla Spanish

Te veo en Madrid.
Monica Bernabe
BlanBla Spanish

A companion gift for readers of How to Speak Spanish with a Narco, a Philosopher and a Human. Based on Monica's No-Guiris Madrid guide, expanded with original practice dialogues and small speaking tasks.

USEFUL LINKS

Before you go.

Venue information checked on 1 October 2026. Use these official websites and official city tourism listings for the latest hours, menus, access and booking details. Walking times are editorial estimates, not live directions.

San Ginés: address and visitor information

Casa Labra: official Madrid tourism listing

Bodega de la Ardosa: venue and menu

El Tigre: official Madrid tourism listing

Mercado de San Miguel: official website

Antón Martín: address, access and market directory

El Rastro: location and outdoor-market hours

La Vía Láctea: visitor information

A NOTE ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The place selection starts with Monica's No-Guiris Madrid. The two supplied Grupiplan guides were consulted for destination ideas; their descriptions, itineraries, photography and designs are not reproduced. The writing, sample conversations and speaking missions here are original.

Book references use the printed page numbers in the supplied ebook. Core survival vocabulary comes from Chapter 7; the guide also puts the repetition and confidence ideas from Chapters 10 and 13 into practice. Other words, such as porras, pincho and probadores, are useful additions for these stops.

USEFUL LINKS

Parks, culture and getting around.

Keep the official pages handy. A good plan has room for a closed door, a long queue or an unexpectedly excellent café.

San Fernando: visitor information

El Retiro: park information

Palacio de Cristal: current access information

Madrid Río: park information

Matadero Madrid: programme and access

Prado: official ticket booking

Metro Madrid: journeys, service and tickets

QUICK CHOICES

Only a few hours? Use the central route and pick one food stop.
Sunday morning? El Rastro, then La Latina.
Want some quiet? Retiro or a stretch of Madrid Río.
Rainy afternoon? Check a museum or indoor market.
Want a conversation? Start with a real question wherever you are.

Madrid rule: the best stop is sometimes the one where you feel comfortable enough to say something.

October 2026 edition • Monica Bernabe / BlanBla Spanish
Sample dialogue prices are fictional. Venue menus and admission costs are not fixed in this guide.