MAD RURAL

Museums and archaeological sites to explore the oldest and authentic side of Madrid



Financiado por la Unión Europea
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GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA
MINISTERIO DE INDUSTRIA Y TURISMO

Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia

Comunidad de Madrid

MAD RURAL

ART AND HISTORY TOURS

Beyond its major monuments, the Community of Madrid boasts a network of cultural venues where art and history can be explored from a more intimate and revealing scale: that of the local area, shared memory and the identity of its towns and villages. Set amongst mountain ranges, fertile plains, pastures and historic town centres, museums, interpretation centres and archaeological sites, form a cultural map that invites visitors to take their time and recognise, in each location, a profound connection between landscape, heritage and everyday life.

In these places, a visit goes beyond mere contemplation to become an experience of interpreting the territory. Old schools, restored buildings, traditional caves and open-air sites preserve not only objects and remains, but also ways of life, knowledge, beliefs and events that have shaped the character of each region. Everything appears here with a different sense of immediacy, as if history, far from being confined to a distant narrative, were still pulsing through local customs, traditions and memory.

This guide brings together some of those spaces where cultural heritage engages naturally with the surroundings and the character of each place. These itineraries invite you to enjoy a peaceful and enriching experience, to let yourself be carried away by little-known stories and to discover a rural Madrid where art, archaeology and memory shape a cultural landscape of unique beauty and authenticity.



MADRID DESTINO RURAL

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MAD
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CAVA

LAS VEGAS & ALCARRIA MADRILEÑA

COLMENAR DE OREJA

Ulpiano Checa Museum

Family-friendly · Heritage

C/ María Teresa Freire, 2



A monographic museum dedicated to Ulpiano Checa, born in Colmenar de Oreja in 1860 and one of the most internationally renowned figures in Spanish painting of his time. It houses the most extensive collection of his work, with a particular focus on historical and Orientalist painting, and offers an insight into an artistic career characterised by great narrative ambition. The visit is made all the more appealing by the fact that it takes place in a villa of great heritage significance, where the museum complements the town's monumental character.

TIELMES

House Museum and Rural School

Heritage

C. de la Escuela, 7 · 91 874 60 02



A former school built in the first half of the 19th century and now converted into an ethnographic museum. Its classrooms, domestic rooms, furnishings, books and objects donated by local residents vividly recreate school life and everyday life from a bygone era, when education and rural life shared the same space. The building also preserves unique details of its own history, such as the murals discovered during its restoration.





CAVE HOUSE MUSEUM

Family-friendly · Heritage

C/ Real, 40 · 918 74 60 02

A traditional dwelling carved into the hillside that preserves the structure of a traditional cave house, with several rooms used for domestic life and as shelter from extreme temperatures. A tour of the house offers an insight into the living conditions of many day-labourer families and the way in which traditional architecture adapted to the terrain and the local economy. It is a simple yet revealing place, where the physical remains speak with quiet power.

Micro-experience

In the Cave House, pause for a moment to look at the walls and the blackened ceiling: the marks left by tools, the soot and the rough texture of the rock turn the visit into a silent insight into the daily lives of those who once lived here.

VALDELAGUNA

Wine Museum – Pablo Morate Wineries

Family-friendly · Heritage · Wine tourism

Avda. del Generalísimo, 30



Located in Valdelaguna, a town closely linked to wine culture, this museum offers an insight into the trades, tools and processes associated with traditional winemaking. Presses, vats and antique tools help visitors understand how viticulture has shaped the landscape and economy of Las Vegas and the Madrid region of Alcarria for generations. The visit is rounded off by the atmosphere of the winery itself, which retains the historical legacy of a region with a long winemaking tradition.

CHINCHÓN

La Posada Ethnological Museum

Family-friendly · Heritage

Plaza de la Iglesia, s/n



Housed in a former 19th-century inn, this ethnological museum recreates, with simplicity and authenticity, different aspects of traditional life in Chinchón. Its spaces, objects and settings evoke the rhythms of domestic life, the trades and the customs of a town whose architectural heritage is also reflected in everyday life. It is a particularly evocative visit for understanding the human dimension behind one of the region's most iconic towns.

MESÓN CUEVAS DEL VINO MUSEUM-RESTAURANT

Heritage · Wine Tourism

A historic cave-cellar linked to Chinchón's winemaking tradition, where inscribed earthenware jars, underground galleries and a remarkable wood-fired oven still survive. Beyond its gastronomic appeal, the site helps visitors understand the importance of excavated underground spaces in the domestic economy and in the preservation of wine, olive oil and other products. A space that perfectly encapsulates the close relationship between vernacular architecture, wine culture and local heritage.



Did you know...?

Beneath Chinchón lies a dense network of caves and galleries excavated over the centuries. Many served as cellars, storerooms or shelters, and explain the extent to which life in the town was also organised underground.



TITULCIA

Archaeological Interpretation Centre

Family-friendly · Heritage

Plaza Mayor, 1

This centre helps visitors to understand the historical significance of Titulcia, which was declared a Site of Cultural Interest in 2012 due to its archaeological site. Through display panels, artefacts and educational resources, it explains the evolution of this unique site, shedding light on the Carpetani and Roman presence in the centre of the Iberian Peninsula. The visit allows visitors to situate the area within a long historical context and understand why this spot in the valley was strategic for centuries.

SANTORCAZ

Olive Oil Museum – Almazara de Brea

Heritage

A space dedicated to olive oil culture and the olive-growing tradition of south-eastern Madrid. The tour takes visitors through the production process, from olive cultivation to the extraction and preservation of the oil, using historic machinery, interpretative panels and the actual setting of the oil mill. It is an experience closely linked to the agricultural landscape of Santorcaz and to a body of knowledge that connects ethnographic heritage, local gastronomy and rural memory.



SIERRA NORTE DE MADRID

PINILLA DEL VALLE

Valley of the Neanderthals / Des-Cubierta Cave

Heritage

A group of seven archaeological and palaeontological sites located in the upper Lozoya Valley, with chronologies spanning approximately 300,000 to 40,000 years before the present. It is one of the most significant sites in the Community of Madrid for understanding human evolution, Pleistocene fauna and the presence of Neanderthals in the mountains. The visit combines popular science, scenic beauty and an extraordinary sense of temporal depth.



Did you know...?

In the Descubierta Cave, skulls of large carnivores were found to have been deliberately placed there. Researchers believe this discovery may be linked to symbolic behaviour amongst the Neanderthals who inhabited the valley.



LOZOYUELA

Sieteiglesias Necropolis

Heritage

An early medieval funerary complex forming part of the network of sites open to the public in the Community of Madrid. Its rock-cut tombs and cists offer valuable insight into the communities that inhabited the valley following the territorial reorganisation of the Middle Ages. The austerity of the site, combined with the surrounding mountainous landscape, reinforces the impression of standing before a relic that is as fragile as it is eloquent.

PRÁDENA DEL RINCÓN

Necropolis and bell foundry

Heritage



An archaeological site linked to the area around the church of Santo Domingo de Silos, where medieval graves and remains associated with ancient craft practices are preserved. The site offers a glimpse into the religious, funerary and productive life of a small mountain settlement, and highlights the continuity of traditional crafts in the Sierra Norte. It is an intimate yet highly revealing visit for understanding local history.

LA CABRERA

A Journey Through History – La Cabrera

Heritage · Nature



An itinerary that brings together some of the most evocative heritage and scenic landmarks in La Cabrera. Along the route, you'll encounter archaeological remains, local traditions, the surroundings of the convent of San Antonio and San Julián, and landscapes that help you to interpret the mountains as a space that has been inhabited for centuries. More than just a route, it is an invitation to explore the interplay of nature, history and legend that defines the municipality.

Did you know...?

The so-called 'Tumba del Moro' has fuelled the local imagination for generations. Its popular name and its position in the landscape have given rise to stories of treasure, antiquities and ancient presences that continue to envelop the site.

PATONES

La Dehesa de la Oliva. Late Antique necropolis at La Dehesa de la Oliva

Heritage



An archaeological site situated in a strategic position overlooking the confluence of the Lozoya and Jarama rivers. Its remains bear witness to a long sequence of occupation, with phases ranging from the Roman Republican period to the Late Antiquity and Early Medieval periods. A visit to the site helps visitors understand how this enclave visually dominated the surrounding territory and why it was a favourable location for settlement, defence and spatial organisation.

BRAOJOS

Visigothic site of Santa María de Valcamino

Heritage



Archaeological remains linked to an early medieval rural settlement, associated with the network of settlements that shaped the Sierra Norte following the end of the Visigothic era. The preserved structures and the burial ground allow us to reconstruct, albeit fragmentarily, the organisation of a small mountain community and its relationship with the surrounding area. A discreet site, yet one of great value for understanding the early history of the valley.

LA CABRERA

Tumba del Moro

Heritage



An anthropomorphic tomb carved from granite and one of the best-known features of La Cabrera's archaeological heritage. Commonly known as the 'Tumba del Moro,' it forms part of the complex of early medieval burial sites in the surrounding area and is thought to date from around the 9th and 10th centuries. Its isolation, its formal simplicity and its setting amongst rocks and hillsides lend it a powerful scenic presence.

SIERRA OESTE DE MADRID

CHAPINERÍA

Environmental Education Centre

Nature | Family

The El Águila Environmental Education Centre, situated in Chapinería, is one of the main gateways to discovering Sierra Oeste de Madrid and the Mediterranean landscapes of the region's south-west. Surrounded by pastures, holm oak groves and pine forests, the centre combines environmental education, guided walks and activities for all ages in a setting closely linked to nature and rural heritage.

From its premises, the centre organises interpretative trails, workshops, visits to local producers and tours of some of the region's most valuable sites, within an area that forms part of the Natura 2000 network and is renowned for the richness of its Mediterranean ecosystems. In addition, the building features a panoramic viewing point, exhibitions and spaces designed to provide an accessible introduction to the biodiversity and culture of the Sierra Oeste.



SIERRA DE GUADARRAMA



FUENFRÍA
Roman road at Fuenfría

Heritage · Nature

An ancient historic road that crosses the Fuenfría valley and retains sections of traditional cobblestones associated with the route through the mountain range. The road formed part of the so-called Via XXIV, one of the routes built by the Romans to link the main settlements in the region and facilitate the transport of goods and soldiers. It was built in the 1st century, during the reign of Emperor Vespasian, to link Segovia with Miaccum —in what is now the Collado Mediano area— and later extended as far as Titulcia, forming part of the route connecting Emerita Augusta (Mérida) with Caesar Augusta (Zaragoza). Travelling along it today takes you through pine forests, past streams and over mountain passes, following one of the most evocative transport routes in the historic Guadarrama region. More than just a mere trace of the past, it is a route where heritage and nature blend together in a particularly captivating harmony.



MIACCUM ROMAN INN. EL BENEFICIO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Heritage

A Roman archaeological site comprising several buildings and a section of road, situated within a traditional dehesa landscape. Various researchers have suggested a possible link with the mansio of Miaccum mentioned in Antoninus' Itinerary, although this identification remains a hypothesis. In any case, the site offers valuable insight into the transit, service and control infrastructures linked to the communications network that crossed the mountain range.

The site originated around an inn situated beside the Roman road that crossed the Sierra de Guadarrama via the Fuenfría Pass, forming part of the dense network of Roman roads in the territory now occupied by the Community of Madrid. This road is thought to have mainly linked Titulcia with Segóbriga and is believed to have been in use between the 1st and 4th centuries AD.

The ruins clearly reveal a central courtyard, rooms intended for travellers' rest, an inner courtyard and Roman baths, with their various bathing areas: the caldarium (hot water), the tepidarium (warm water) and the frigidarium (cold water). A visit here allows you to imagine the intense activity generated by these routes and to understand the commercial, strategic and social importance of roads in Roman times.

Today, the site has an interpretation centre and offers guided tours.

HOYO DE MANZANARES

Visigothic archaeological site of La Cabilda

Heritage

A rural Hispano-Visigothic settlement from the early medieval period, active between the 7th and 9th centuries according to research carried out at the site. It reveals the visible remains of a 7thcentury AD Visigothic village, situated in an easily accessible location with spectacular panoramic views of the Sierra de los Picazos and Monte de El Pardo.

It preserves domestic, productive, funerary and possibly religious structures, making it a key site for understanding how these small mountain communities lived after the end of the Roman world. Various artefacts relating to the daily lives of its inhabitants have also been found here, such as millstones, pieces of jewellery and fragments of both ornamental and utilitarian pottery.

Its inhabitants led a life centred on agriculture and pastoralism, organised into small communities settled in the warmest and most sheltered areas of the Guadarrama mountain range. The development of the site has also been notable for its emphasis on social archaeology and community involvement, aspects which reinforce its uniqueness and heritage value.



EL BOALO

The Visigothic necropolis at El Cerro de El Rebollar: the past rediscovered

Heritage

The El Rebollar site reveals remains spanning a vast period, from the 7th to the 18th century. The most notable finds include the remains of a Visigothic structure and the burials discovered beneath what was once a Christian chapel. This superimposition of structures and periods reflects the continuity of human occupation and the religious significance of the site over the centuries. Today, it is considered one of the best-preserved archaeological sites in the Community of Madrid, a landmark that provides an invaluable insight into the customs, rituals and daily life of its inhabitants of yesteryear.



MUSEUMS TO UNDERSTAND THE SIERRA

THE LANGUAGE OF STONES. CANTERO DE APEDRETE MUSEUM

Pl. de la Constitución 5, Alpedrete

Heritage · Family-Friendly



A space dedicated to the stonemasonry tradition of Alpedrete, a craft that played a decisive role in the historical construction of numerous buildings and monuments in Madrid and the surrounding area. Tools, photographs, documents and interpretative resources show how granite quarrying shaped not only the landscape but also the identity of the town. It is a small museum, but essential for understanding the importance of stonemasonry in the Sierra de Guadarrama. We recommend taking a tour of the quarries to enjoy the history and surroundings of this area.



PAQUITO FERNÁNDEZ OCHOA SKI MUSEUM - CERCEDILLA

Pl. Mayor 3, Cercedilla

Heritage · Nature · Family-Friendly

A museum space dedicated to Paquito Fernández Ochoa and to the history of skiing, mountain sports and the natural environment of the Sierra de Guadarrama. Opened in 2009, it brings together objects, photographs and documents that connect Cercedilla's sporting heritage with the development of winter tourism in the mountains. The visit reveals how this area has made the mountains a place of culture, endeavour and collective celebration..





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https://www.madrural.com/en/las-vegas-y-la-alcarria-madrilena-en/four-museums-to-discover-the-best-of-art-in-madrural/

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