

Moving with the New Movida:

Two Days in Madrid

Anyone who went wild when they first moved out of their parents' house can identify with Madrid's *movida*. After four decades of living under the glaring gaze of an ultra-conservative dictator, Madrileños took the news of Generalísimo Franco's death as an excuse to do everything they hadn't been able to do under the regime, and the party lasted well into the 1980s. Today, new blood and life is being injected into the *barrios* that were at the heart of the craziness, making them fascinating places to visit.

LA LATINA & CHUECA

Start the day in the barrio of **La Latina**, with *churros y chocolate* in **Muñiz** (Calle de Calatrava 3). What is it about these deep-fried doughnut strips dipped in chocolate that makes them a Spanish favourite? Dunk and find out.

A gritty but rapidly gentrifying part of town, La Latina is a crossroads between the desirable Madrid de los Austrias and working-class barrios such as Lavapiés. The web of lanes around Calle de Segovia and Calle de Bailén once constituted the **Morería**, the Moorish quarter of La Latina shortly after it fell into Christian hands. The sloping gardens of **Vistillas** at the western end of the barrio offer nice views west to the Sierra de Guadarrama.

Just south of the gardens stands the outsize baroque **Basílica de San Francisco el Grande**. Completed under the guidance of Francesco Sabatini, the recently restored baroque basilica has some outstanding features, including frescoed cupolas (restored in 2000–01) and chapel ceilings by Francisco Bayeu.

After visiting the basilica, head north to the district of **Chueca**, a lively barrio that was at the epicentre of *la*

movida and retains a slightly louche feel to this day. At **Plaza de Chueca**, you have reached the epicentre of gay Madrid. All around here is concentrated an infinity of watering holes of all types, ranging from ageless vermouth bars to outrageous gay clubs with very dark rooms and oodles of leather. Near the square are **Calle del Almirante** and **Calle de Piamonte**, each full of fashion boutiques and the occasional designer restaurant. They were hip in the 1980s and still are today.

North of the plaza you'll find the curious **Museo Romántico** (Calle de San Mateo). In 1924 the Marqués de la Vega-Inclán turned the building into the museum, a treasure trove of mostly 19th-century paintings, furniture, porcelain and other bits and bobs from a bygone age.

Plunge into the tangle of streets around the Plaza de Chueca before emerging to the west for lunch at **Casa Perico** (Calle de la Ballesta 18; shut Sunday). Since the 1940s punters have been gathering at the dark little tables here for such house specialities as *arroz a lo cutre* ('grotty rice' – it's nicer than it sounds).

It's now siesta time for the city, so wile away a couple of hours by exploring the shops in Cuecha. Many of the fashion stores along **Calle de Fuencarral** stay open in the afternoon.

At 5.30pm, the **Museo Municipal de Arte Contemporáneo** (Calle del Conde Duque 9-11) opens its door to reveal two floors of modern Spanish art. Of particular interest are the installations on the theme of Madrid.

For dinner, squeeze into **Bocaito** (Calle de la Libertad 4-6) for tapas or **A Brasileira** (Calle de Pelayo 49) for

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Brazilian food and cocktails. Both are happy-go-lucky places and will put you in the mood to explore the surrounding phalanxes of bars. Try **Areia** (Calle de la Hortaleza 92), **Café Pepe Botella** (Calle de San Andrés 12), **Medina Magerit** (Calle del Divino Pastor 21) and **Museo Chicote** (Gran Vía). If you share Madrileños' aversion to sleep, push on to a club – **Café la Palma** (Calle de la Palma 62) and **Tupperware** (Corredera Alta de San Pablo 26) are both good bets.

LAVAPIÉS

Ease into the day by visiting Madrid's best-known weekly flea market, **El Rastro** (Sundays and holidays only) in Lavapiés. Antique furniture shops fling open their doors and stands sell anything from old coins to utter rubbish. It's a great place for an aimless wander – though do watch out for pickpockets.

As lunchtime and *la hora del vermut* (the vermouth hour) near, join the locals at one of the bars on the Calle de la Cava Baja for an aperitif. Stay on this road for lunch at **Casa Lucio** (No 35). Lucio has been wowing Madrileños with his light touch, quality ingredients and down-home local cooking for years.

Spend the afternoon wandering the barrio. The attraction of Lavapiés is the earthy feel of what is one of the city's last true barrios, where people live crowded in on top of one another and everyone seems to know everyone else. It's the residence of an interesting mix of working-class Madrileños, Roma people and migrants from far and wide. According to one count more than 50 countries are represented in an area made up of a couple of dozen streets. It remains a largely poor part of town, in spite of efforts to renovate it and the bohemian attraction it has for many young people.

In the evening, return to some of your new favourite haunts in Chueca or book yourself in for dinner and flamenco. **Las Tablas** (Plaza de España 9; [www](http://www.lastablasmadrid.com)

[.lastablasmadrid.com](http://www.lastablasmadrid.com)) has quickly earned a reputation for quality flamenco – some nights you'll get throaty singing and soul-baring, others you'll get fusion jazz and soul. Either way, you're in for another memorable night.

SLEEPING

Budget:

Hostal Don Juan (Plaza Vazquez de Mella 1; ☎ 915 22 77 46) Elegant two-storey hotel with luminous art-filled rooms.

Midrange:

Hostal San Lorenzo (www.hostal-lorenzo.com; ☎ 91 521 30 57) Charming hotel with modern rooms and exposed brickwork.

Top End:

Villa de la Reina (www.h10.es; ☎ 01 523 91 01) Housed in an early 20th-century building with soothingly decorated rooms.

For more reviews of Madrid accommodation, check out the Sleep section on www.lonelyplanet.com/accommodation.

By Amanda Canning

For the complete guide to Madrid grab a copy of Lonely Planet's *Madrid* guide; or get right under the skin of the city with *Best of Madrid*. Both books are available online at shop.lonelyplanet.com.

