

This walking tour takes you back to **Medieval Madrid de los Austrias**, or the Madrid of the Habsburg Kings.

**Distance:** 3,5 km

**Duration:** non-stop walking 45 mins., plus time spend on site visits

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This walk starts at the square **Puerta del Sol**. The building with the clock, **Casa de Correos**, knows every Spaniard. This bell will ring in the new year on 31 December with 12 bells on national television. Before the building on the ground, look for the **Kilometro Cero**-tile; this is the zero point from where all distances in Spain are measured. At the beginning of **Calle del Carmen** stands the statue of a bear and a Madroño tree; together they form the symbol of the city of Madrid. The equestrian statue on Sol is of King Carlos III. Don't forget to take a picture of the illuminated advertising man "Tio Pepe", that is now part of Spain's national heritage.

*Calle Arenal and surroundings:* Walk through **Calle Arenal**, a busy shopping street, turn left into **Pasadizo San Ginés**. Here you can eat Madrid's most famous churros con chocolate at **Chocolatería San Ginés**. The site of **Iglesia San Ginés** was home to a church as early as the twelfth century, but the current Baroque church dates back to 1645 and was rebuilt in 1824 after a fire. In the church you can see a work by the painter **El Greco**.

*Monasterio de las Descalzas* walk via **Calle de Bordaderos** to the 16th century **Monasterio de las Descalzas**. The monastery was founded in 1559 by Juana de Austria and has always had close ties with the Habsburg family. Nowadays it is a museum.

*Monasterio de Encarnación* Return to **Calle Arenal** and walk along the backside of the Royal Theatre via **Calle Arrieta** to the **Monasterio de Encarnación**. This monastery was founded in 1611 by Margarita of Austria. Here, too, an important art collection can be admired. From the monastery you walk through **Calle Bailén** towards **Plaza de Oriente**.

*Plaza de Oriente:* On your left you can see the **Teatro Real** and on the right the **Palacio Real** and the **Jardines de Sabatini**. Plaza de Oriente is a lovely square for a break, either on a terrace, or just on a bench in the sun. Right next to the palace stands **La Catedral de Nuestra Señora de la Almudena**. Construction, which would last more than 100 years, began at the end of the 19th century. The result is a building in which different architectural styles are united, from Neogothics to Neoclassicism. It was not until 1993 that the cathedral was inducted by the Pope John Paul II. Turn right past the cathedral into **Calle Mayor**, then you'll arrive at the **Cuesta de la Vega**. This elevated street runs over the, in time of the Moors, natural defensive wall of the Moorish citadel. You can still see the last remnants of the Moorish and Medieval city wall, **La Muralla Árabe**.

*Plaza de la Villa,* walk back to **Calle Mayor**, buy at **El Horno Santiaguesa** the typical Madrilenian pastry and then turn right to **Plaza de la Villa**, one of Madrid's oldest squares. The three buildings that enclose this square date back to different times. The house with the tower, **Torre de los Lujanes** is from the 15th century and is one of the oldest buildings of the city built in [Mudéjar](#) style. **Casa de Cisneros** is a 16<sup>th</sup> century palace built in [Plateresque](#) style, a Spanish style in which Mudéjar, Gothic and Renaissance elements were combined. **Casa de la Villa**, from the 17th century represents the Baroque style.

*Cava San Miguel:* Continue through **Calle Mayor** and turn right into **Calle Cava de San Miguel**. Visit **Mercado San Miguel**, a 21st century "Gourmet Temple" where one can enjoy food stuff and relax. Do not miss the tapas!

*Plaza Mayor* Descend further down the medieval street and take a left at the **Arco de Cuchilleros** to **Plaza Mayor**. Plaza Mayor dates back to 1617 and was designed by Juan Gómez de Mora. In 1790 the square was rebuilt after a fire under the direction of architect Juan de Vilanueva. Here you will see the equestrian **Statue of Felipe III** and **La Casa de Panadería**, today home to the tourism office of Madrid.

*Plaza de la Provincia* The Madrid and los Austrias Tour ends at **Palacio Santa Cruz** on Plaza de **la Provincia**. The building was built in 1629 by Felipe IV as a prison, but under Felipe V it became a palace in 1767.

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