

## Madrid, Spain



### Report made by

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### General information of the city

- **Name of the city and country:** Madrid, Spain
- **Description:** The capital of Spain, located on top of a plateau in the heart of the Iberian Peninsula, is known for the friendliness of its locals, the bustling activity of its bars and terraces and for being home to classical palaces and to masterpieces of painters, such as Velazquez or Goya.

### Transportation accessibility

- Currently, around 60% of subway stations are reportedly wheelchair accessible. Here is a map of accessible stations with elevators to access the platforms ([2022 version](#)). Nevertheless, on some of these stations there is a gap or a step, varying in height (up to 20cm sometimes), between the train and the platform.
- Line 3 is fully accessible (with no gap or step) if you board either the first or the last car.

- The north-bound platform of Atocha-Renfe Line 1 subway station, useful for transfers between the high-speed train and other areas or stations in the city, has one such step.
- There are some key line transfers that are not yet accessible, so check your route using the [map of accessible stations](#) before boarding.
- There are announcements for upcoming subways and for next stop once on board.
- Unfortunately, elevator maintenance is not the best and elevators do not always work. If so, elevators can be out of service for several days.
- On the other hand, the bus system is 100% wheelchair accessible. Just make a sign to the driver of an incoming bus for them to deploy an automatic ramp to board the bus.
- Newer bus stops have visual indications for next incoming buses. On board, all buses have visual and audio indications for next stops.
- RENFE trains, to go to other cities, however, are not all wheelchair accessible and the schedule for accessible trains changes everyday, so you may have to wait for an accessible train to pass. Accessible carts do not always stop in the same spot of the platforms, so getting to the accessible door to board may be tricky.
- Long distance high-speed trains [AVE](#), [AVLO](#) (low cost) or [OUIGO](#) (low cost) from either Atocha or Chamartín train stations are also wheelchair accessible, though assistance to board needs to be booked at least 12h in advance when buying the ticket. Assistance is available, with prior booking, to passengers with different types of disabilities. You need to be there 30 minutes before departure.
- Accessible taxis can be booked via the [FREENOW app](#). They may take up to 30 minutes to arrive depending on where they are in the city, but sometimes you can also get one in under 10 minutes, as they are not uncommon.
- **Score: 3/5.** Fair. The bus system is widespread and 100% wheelchair accessible, as well as long distance trains with prior reservation. However, the subway network's accessibility (reportedly at 60%) is not reliable, as some of the accessible stations have either a gap or a tall step to board, although improving. Elevator maintenance and RENFE trains accessibility to outer cities could also improve.

## **Streets accessibility**

- Streets in Madrid's city center tend downhill from North to South. From East to West they are more or less flat.
- There are curb cuts in all crossings. They are better at the city center (newer ones at zero level), but get worse the further you move from it (so you should watch your step when crossing).

- Newer pavement in the city center has bigger and smoother tiles, great to roll on, but pavement in some areas of the city is quite uneven (some of it leading to El Prado museum), due to broken or misplaced tiles, and not well maintained, so keeping an eye on the ground is a must.
  - Also, some streets in the city center are pedestrians only.
  - As for visual accessibility, there is tactile pavement leading to all curb cut crossings.
  - All bigger intersections have beeping traffic lights. They are always active during the day, so no button needs to be pressed, but they get turned off at night.
  - Although there are few public toilets, accessible toilets can be found in shopping malls, most tourist attractions, public buildings and many newer or bigger restaurants.
- **Score: 3.5/5.** Pavement in the city center is mostly good, although there are uneven sidewalks not far away from major stations. Also, despite there being curb cuts everywhere, they get shadier the further you get from the center. There's tactile pavement on all crossings and beeping traffic lights in wider streets.

### **Restaurants & shops**

- About 50-70% of restaurant and shops entrances are wheelchair accessible in the city center. On outer areas, it may drop to 40-50%. If you can climb a single step varying in height, the number of accessible places may be higher.
  - Accessible restaurants and shops have either 0-level access or ramps. Ramps are usually mild, though every now and then you may also find ill-shaped ones.
  - Madrid is known for its terraces, so many restaurants, bars and cafes have them, thus finding an accessible place to eat will not be a problem.
  - Bigger restaurants have accessible toilets.
- **Score: 4/5.** It's quite good. Around 50 to 70% of them are wheelchair accessible in the city center. Furthermore, as Madrid is the city of terraces, you will always find an accessible place to eat nearby. Accessible toilets are also common in bigger restaurants.

### **Hotels & accommodation**

- Many hotels in Madrid are not only wheelchair accessible, but also have accessible rooms.
- Accessible hotels are also available in different price ranges, from hostels (such as, [Bastardo](#) or [The Hat, Echo Boutique Hostel](#)), to mid-range options (for instance, the Ibis Hotel chains) or higher-end hotels.

- In the middle range, you can find the chain with the most accessible hotels in the world, ILUNION Hotels. There are 4 available in Madrid, although not too close from the city center. 40% of the hotels' staff members are persons with disabilities, so they are knowledgeable in the needs of disabled people. Service dogs are also most welcomed.
- For other options, such as AirBnB apartments, you should contact the owners before booking, as regular buildings accessibility is not that good (a step at the entrance or steps before the elevator is a regular occurrence).
- **Score: 4.5/5.** Many accessible options in different price ranges. We specially recommend hotels from the ILUNION Hotels chain, which have really good accessibility for all type of disabilities, although some are a bit off from the city center.

### **Tourist attractions accessibility**

- Most tourist attractions in Madrid are wheelchair accessible (most museums and palaces) and have accessible toilets, although many also have inaccessible areas.
- An unfortunate exception is Sorolla's museum, which has many stairs, as the museum is at the painter's former residence and no changes have been made to make it accessible.
- Also, the tour of Real Madrid's stadium has just a few accessible areas, although accessibility at the stadium is currently being improved. Works should be finished by autumn 2023.
- Most museums, like El Prado museum, have accessibility features for people with hearing, visual and cognitive impairments. Nevertheless, Sign Language guides are usually only available in Spanish Sign Language.
- Discounts or even free entrance for people with disabilities and a companion are also common.
- Accessibility information can easily be found on most attractions' websites.
- **Score: 3.5/5.** Quite good. Most attractions are fully or partially wheelchair accessible, although, for instance, Sorolla's museum is not accessible at all. Nevertheless, accessibility information is usually available on all attractions' websites and discounts for disabled people, plus companions, are common.

### **Getting there**

- Madrid's Barajas Airport (MAD) has four terminals and is connected to the city by subway L8 or pink line (one stop for T1, T2 & T3, which are next to each other, named "Aeropuerto T1-T2-T3", and another for T4 terminal, named "Aeropuerto T4"), bus and taxi. The terminal that you get to depends on your airline, but most international flights get to T4 terminal.

- L8 (the subway's pink line) gets you to Nuevos Ministerios a hub with other subway lines (L6, which is the circular line that surrounds the center, although many of its stations are not accessible) and many bus lines (all local lines are accessible) and train lines (not recommended, as mentioned before).
- T4 also has a train station, though not all trains are accessible and there is no way to know which ones are until you are there, sometimes having to wait long periods of time. Also, it gets to the same stops as the subway's L8 (Nuevos Ministerios) or the bus (Atocha station). The only one that is nearer the touristic areas (Recoletos) is not wheelchair accessible.
- There are regular buses from line 203, all wheelchair accessible, every 15 minutes from T1, T2 and T4 terminals that get you to Cibeles or Atocha Station (both near touristic areas) in about 40 to 60 minutes depending on the traffic.
- Finally, accessible taxis are also an option. You can book them via the aforementioned FREENOW app or by phone or online at an [accessible taxi company](#).
- You may also get to Madrid by high-speed train from other major cities in Spain. High-speed trains are wheelchair accessible (see [Transportation section](#)).
- The high-speed train stations, either Atocha or Chamartín, are conveniently connected both by bus and subway (L1 for Atocha and L1 or L10 for Chamartín) to other areas in the city and to other nearing cities by RENFE trains (see [Transportation section](#) for accessibility details).
- **Score: 4/5.** Accessibility from main transportation hubs to the city center is good, although from the airport to touristic areas it can take between 40 to 60 minutes, depending on the chosen transportation and the traffic. We recommend either the subway plus bus (depending on where's your accommodation) or the bus (line 203) if you want to go close to the touristic center without transfers.

### **Overall accessibility score**

- **Score:** 22.5/30. Overall **3.7/5 stars**.
- **Summary:** Madrid's accessibility doesn't top any of the categories, but it is still above average in all them, making it a well-rounded city for accessible tourism. Inconsistent subway accessibility and poor sidewalk maintenance in some areas are its downside, but, on the other hand, the easiness of finding wheelchair accessible accommodation is a rare treat.