

**ROAD TO
SPAIN**



If there is one thing that links the rich history, culinary delights and avant-garde art of Spain, it's passion.

Discover it for yourself, as you head off on a journey from Madrid to Barcelona, soaking in the sights and the culture along the way. In the space of four days, take a ride from Madrid, through Zaragoza, Valencia, all the way to the seaside city of Barcelona. Historical sights, works of art and fabulous cuisine await!

SPAIN



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DAY 1

MADRID

Your journey begins in Madrid. The Spanish capital, and a cultural and economic hub of southern Europe, Madrid is a city full of art and culture, exquisite cuisine and incredible nightlife.

On that last note, Madrid - so the tale is told - has more nightclubs and bars per capita than any other city in Europe. True? Who knows, but rumours spread on account of their plausibility; whatever the facts, only a city with an incredible nightlife could entertain such a piece of trivia.

But what, then, can a day in Madrid be filled with if the night is to be spent enjoying the endless splendours the city has to offer?

Visit the Museo Cerralbo, a seventeenth-century aristocratic mansion found in the middle of the city. Now a museum, the house features more than 50,000 objects - paintings, carpets, coins, weapons, and more - originally possessions of the mansion's owner, Marquis of Cerralbo. Furnishings and decorations have been maintained, so taking a step inside is like stepping back in time as well.

The Palacio de Cibeles is certainly worthy of a visit too. Previously the headquarters of the Spanish Post Office and the telegraph company, the palace was built in 1904 specifically for the purpose. Functional design runs through the stone wall's veins. A large courtyard leads to the various services held within the building on the ground floor: postal, telegraph and telephone.

Yet this didn't come at the expense of aesthetics, as the the building was designed to be a 'total work of art'.

Rake in a spectacular view of the city by taking the cable car (or the Teleférico to locals) along its 2.5 km, 10 minute journey. You'll be able to see sights like the Plaza de España, the Royal Palace and the San



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DAY 2

ZARAGOZA (314 KM FROM MADRID, 3 HOURS 15 MINUTES)

Make your way north-east out of the city on the A-2. All you need to do to get to Zaragoza is follow this highway until you reach the city.

Zaragoza is a city known for many things, yet three in particular stand out: architecture, art and cuisine. An example of the first, the iconic Basílica del Pilar; of the second, endless works by local artist Francisco de Goya, who is considered the most important Spanish artist of the late 18th and early 19th centuries; of the third, a thriving tapas and bar scene.

There is no way you can visit Zaragoza without seeing the Basílica del Pilar. Take a walk down the Plaza del Pilar, a 400m stretch that runs alongside the basilica. Marvel at the sheer grandiosity of the building, partially

the result of renovations and additions by the royal architect Ventura Rodriguez some time after the church was already completed. For locals, this is only appropriate, as the significance placed on the basilica is immense; people line up to kiss a sacred pillar, as do parents to have their babies blessed next to the Virgin Mary.

Make your way to El Tubo, a city-centre area largely frequented for its traditional Spanish tapas and bars. Not only are there treats for your tastebuds, but also your eyes with buildings like the San Gil Abad Church just around the corner.



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DAY
3

VALENCIA

(308 KM FROM ZARAGOZA, 3 HOURS 10 MINUTES)

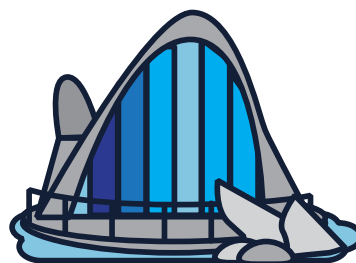
Head south-west from Zaragoza on the A-23 until you get close to Sagunto. Here you'll turn right onto the V-23, and then, soon after, the V-21 to Valencia.

Valencia is where the ancient and the modern collide; where the past is preserved at the same time as the future is embraced. Modern and historic buildings pepper the landscape, helping the city effortlessly straddle two distinct periods in time.

Pining for the old? La Lonja should satisfy your historical itch. As one of Europe's most famous civil gothic monuments, La Lonja was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996. Originally used for silk trading, the building has always been a hub for

commerce. It was built during the golden age of Valencia, when the city was one of Europe's economic and cultural powerhouses. As such, the grandeur and decadence of the building is second to none.

After something new? The City of Arts and Sciences is the spaceship that propelled the city into the future. A complex devoted to the spread of scientific and cultural knowledge, the City is made up of five main attractions: The Oceanogràfic, Europe's largest aquarium holding almost 500 different species; The Hemisfèric, a digital 3D cinema featuring a gargantuan 900 metre screen; The Príncipe Felipe Science Museum, a place where the motto is "not touching is prohibited"; The Opera house, showing a range of concerts, operas, zarzuela and ballet; and finally The Umbracle, a giant garden covering 17,000 square metres.



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DAY
4

BARCELONA

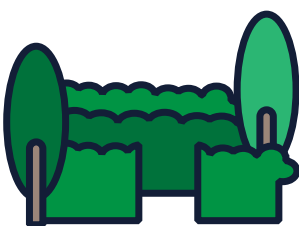
(350 KM FROM VALENCIA, 3 HOURS 33 MINUTES)

Drive out of Valencia north-east on the V-21. Follow this until it joins the AP-7, which again you will follow until it splits off onto the C-32, for you to take into Barcelona. Be warned that this route has tolls, but it's worth it to cut down on your travel time.

A seaside city, Barcelona has a bit of something for everyone. Art buff? Visit the museums dedicated to Picasso and Miro. Love food? Check out some of the local quirky bars like Betty Ford's or El Bosc de les Fades. Prefer to just soak up the sun? You can do that too, on some of the city's many beaches, or perhaps while swimming in the crisp Mediterranean sea.

One thing you won't want to miss, however, is the work of the architect Antoni Gaudi, in particular the Casa Batllo and the Park Guell. Describing the aesthetic of his works is difficult. Imagine sand castles built by Willy Wonka and Dr. Suess, adorned with mosaics, glitter, stained glass, and a sprinkle of something magical. Casa Batllo is a house and Park Guell is a public garden/park, but both convey strongly the modernism that defined Gaudi's work.

Labyrinth Park is another hidden gem worth exploring. The city's oldest conserved garden, Labyrinth Park has in its centre a hedge maze that only the cleverest and craftiest will be able to find their way around. Yet doing so is certainly worth it - the centre has a special charm, featuring as it does a small pool and a statue of Eros, the Greek God of Love.



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THAT ONLY THE CLEVEREST
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CONCLUSION

Spain is calling! If you're ready to answer, make your way online and check out the latest deals on car hire from Madrid Airport at <https://www.drivenow.com.au/spain/car-hire-madrid.jspc>.

SOURCES:

Madrid

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Barcelona

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