



**Madrid**, with a population of just over three million, is Europe's fourth largest city - after London, Paris and Milan - and its highest capital, at 650 m (2132 ft) above sea level.

It is a cosmopolitan city, a business centre, home to the central public administration, the Government of the State, and the Spanish Parliament as well as being the habitual residence of the Monarchs.

Madrid is not one of the most important cities in Europe but in the world and all kind of possibilities for the visitors are to be enjoyed with unique settings like the Royal Palace and places that know no equal, like the Plaza Mayor, the Retiro Park, the Plaza de España as well as Madrid's museum mile, with more masterpieces per square foot than virtually anywhere else in the world.

The capital has opened itself up to the world and the world has come to know Madrid, the city that guards its treasures, unveiling them to us little by little, surprising visitors with its hidden corners, secrets and combining its local flavour with that of Europe as a whole; the city in which business, culture and leisure activities get together themselves into an environment which makes a visit to this capital city an unforgettable experience.

Madrid, can trace its origins to the times of Arab Emir Mohamed I (852-886), who ordered the construction of a fortress on the left bank of the Manzanares River. It later became the subject of a dispute between the Christians and Arabs until it was conquered by Alfonso VI in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, under the reign of Carlos III, the great arteries of the city were designed, such as the Paseo de la Castellana and Paseo del Prado. What remains today of the distant past are mainly the Baroque and neoclassical structures of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, such as the Plaza Mayor, Royal Palace ...



## **TUESDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> MAY**

Airport pick-up and transfer to the hostel.  
Accommodation if rooms are available, otherwise a storage room will be provided.

Once there, meeting to talk about activities planned, as well as hostel policy and useful details about Madrid and surrounding area. After that, students are free to wander around until dinner time. Additionally, AIP tour guide will be fully available to help students out with any questions in order to make a little bit easier arrival in Spain.

**08'30 PM** Dinner

## **WEDNESDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY**

**09'45 AM**

Departure towards **Toledo**.

Guided tour through the main historical monuments of the city.

In Toledo, the architecture of different eras and style is mixed, as were the peoples who lived there in the past. The Jewish synagogues, Arab mosques and Christian churches form part of the different cultures that made this their home. Visitors coming to Toledo for the first time will no doubt be surprised by the amount of history and wealth of culture to be found in this city. Its urban layout, set on a hill encircled by the river Tajo, has remained almost unchanged. Enclosed by walls and formed by a maze of streets that go up and down and cross, it thereby offers travellers its historic monuments and mysterious corners at every turn.

**04'30 PM** Departure to Madrid.

**08'30 PM** Dinner



## **THURSDAY 01<sup>ST</sup> JUNE**

**09'45 AM**

**Royal Palace & Prado Museum.**

The Royal Palace was built to impress. The site had been occupied for centuries by a royal fortress but after a fire in 1734 Philip V commissioned a truly palatial replacement to build a new palace in its place to the Italian architects Juvara and Sachetti. It is not currently used as a royal residence, but it is set up to celebrate state receptions. The Prado Museum contains the **best collection of Spanish painting in the world**, that of the famous universal masters: **El Greco, Vélazquez, Goya** and the famous Spanish artists of the Golden Century: **Ribera, Zurbaran and Murillo**. It was in origin a royal collection, begun by the Habsburgs and carried on by the Bourbons. The decision to erect a new building to house the collection was taken in the reign of Charles III, and the gallery was opened in 1819 as the Museum of the Royal Picture Collection.

**03'30 PM** End of tour and free time.

**09'00 PM** Dinner.

## **FRIDAY 02<sup>ND</sup> JUNE**

**09'00 AM**

**Valley of the Fallen & El Escorial.**

Guided tour at El Escorial & free time to wander **El Valle de los Caídos**. Philip II selected the site for the Monastery, construction of which took over 20 years. The King himself ensured that the best materials were used and brought the most celebrated artists of the day to El Escorial. It was conceived as a mausoleum and contemplative retreat rather than a splendid residence. Free time for lunch.

General Franco had the Holy Cross of the Valley of the Fallen built as a memorial to those who died in the Civil War. Located 8 miles north of El Escorial, the cross is 490 ft high and rises above a basilica carved 820 ft deep into the rock by Republican prisoners of war.

**Before group visit to the monastery, free time will be allowed for lunch break (picnic bag to be collected during breakfast).**

**09'00 PM** Dinner.



## **SATURDAY 03<sup>RD</sup> JUNE**

**11'00 AM** Departure to Valencia.

On our way short stop to have a quick snack in Alarcón. This town, perfectly preserved, dates back to the 08<sup>th</sup> century. It became a key military base for the Reconquest and was recaptured from the Moors in 1184 following a nine-month siege. The small and triangular castle, high above the Jucar River, has been turned into a "PARADOR", preserving much of its medieval atmosphere.

**05'00 PM** Arrival to Valencia and end of tour.

**Accommodation in MADRID**  
**HOSTAL AGUILAR 34 + 91 - 429 59 26**  
**Carrera de San Jerónimo, 32 (2<sup>nd</sup> floor)**