

ART VISIT GUIDE · PRIVATE PLAN

Madrid, 12 to 14 October

Prepared for Helen & David

Monday to Wednesday · Balanced pace · For two

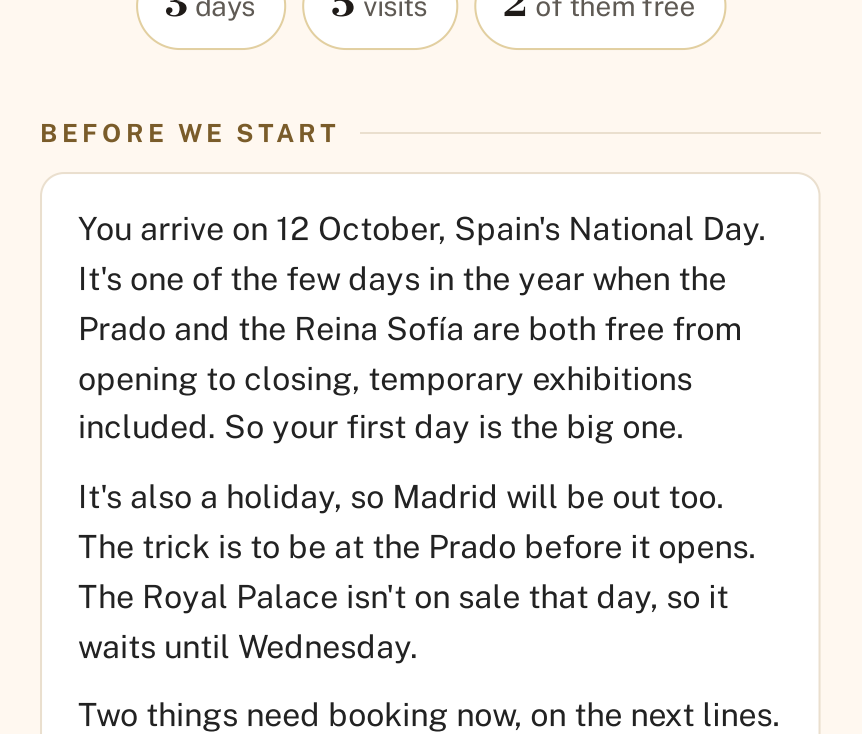


Photo: Diego Spano / Pexels

3 days

5 visits

2 of them free

BEFORE WE START

You arrive on 12 October, Spain's National Day. It's one of the few days in the year when the Prado and the Reina Sofía are both free from opening to closing, temporary exhibitions included. So your first day is the big one.

It's also a holiday, so Madrid will be out too. The trick is to be at the Prado before it opens. The Royal Palace isn't on sale that day, so it waits until Wednesday.

Two things need booking now, on the next lines. Everything else can wait for the day.

Every opening day, hour and price here was checked against the official sites. Give each one a quick look the morning you go, in case something changes.

BOOK THESE NOW



Reina Sofía, free · Mon 12 Oct, 16:00

Free all day on 12 October, but you still need a ticket. Reserve the free one online.

[Reserve on the official site →](#)



Royal Palace · Wed 14 Oct, 10:00

Self-guided visit, €18 plus a €0.77 booking fee. Some morning slots were already sold out when I checked: book now.

[Book on the official site →](#)

AT A GLANCE

Mon 12 Museo del Prado, Museo Reina Sofía **Free**

Tue 13 Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Retiro Park

Wed 14 Palacio Real de Madrid, Museo Cerralbo

WHO IS CLOSED WHEN

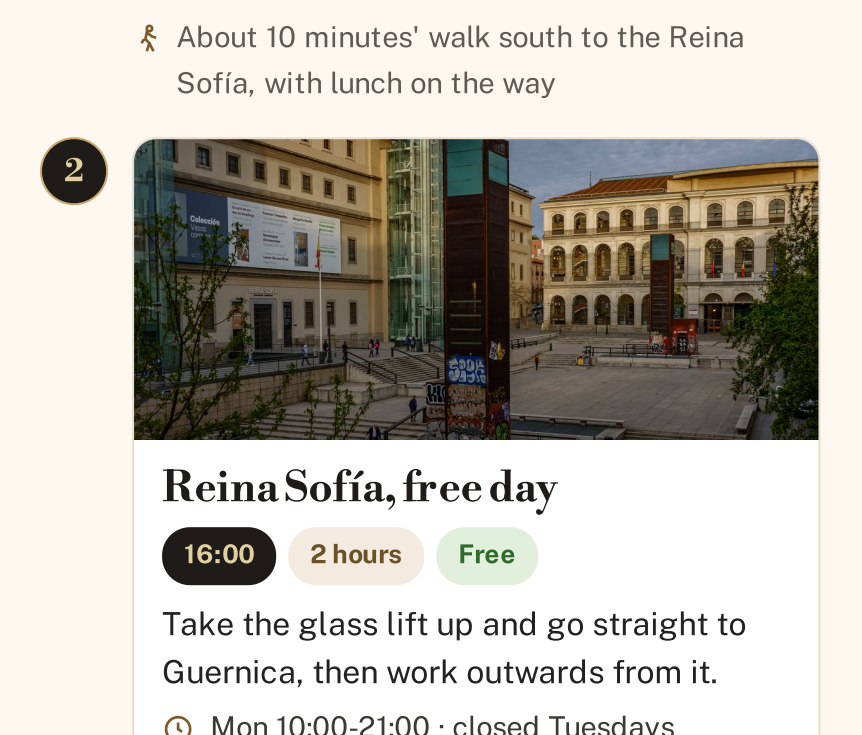
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Prado	✓	✓	✓				
Reina Sofía	✓	✗	✓				
Royal Palace	*	✓	✓				
Cerralbo	✗	✓	✓				

✗ closed all day. Your days are underlined in gold.

* The Royal Palace has no tickets on sale for 12 October.

DAY 1 · MONDAY 12 OCTOBER

The Prado and Guernica, both free



Why this order. Today the Prado and the Reina Sofía are free all day. They're a 10-minute walk apart. The Prado at opening, before the holiday crowds, and the Reina Sofía after a long lunch.

1

Museo del Prado, free day

10:00

3 hours

Free

There's no online booking today: free tickets are handed out at the ticket office. Be in the queue before 10:00. Pick three rooms and do them well.

🕒 Holidays 10:00-19:00

📅 Free all day on 12 October, collection and exhibitions. Ticket office only

DON'T MISS

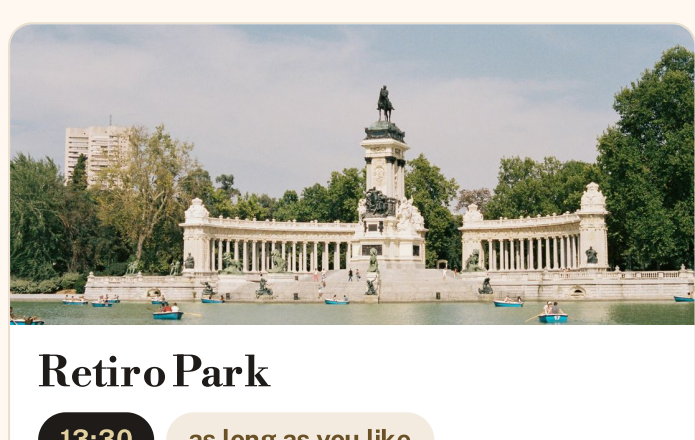
- Velázquez's Las Meninas, Room 12
- Bosch's Garden of Earthly Delights
- Goya's Black Paintings, Rooms 66 and 67

[Open in Maps](#)

[The Prado in 2 hours](#)

🚶 About 10 minutes' walk south to the Reina Sofía, with lunch on the way

2



Reina Sofía, free day

16:00

2 hours

Free

Take the glass lift up and go straight to Guernica, then work outwards from it.

🕒 Mon 10:00-21:00 · closed Tuesdays

📅 Free on 12 October, with a free ticket reserved online

DON'T MISS

- Picasso's Guernica, and the rooms of his sketches for it next door

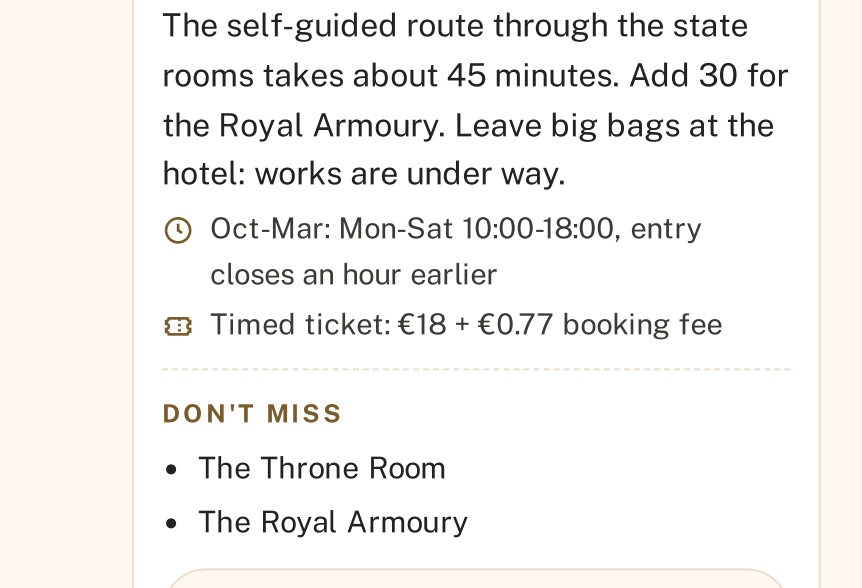
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[Guernica and what else](#)

⇒ **Plan B.** If the Prado queue is too long at 10:00, swap the order: the Reina Sofía in the morning, the Prado in the afternoon. Both are free until closing.

DAY 2 · TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER

The Thyssen, then the Retiro



Why this order. The Reina Sofía is closed on Tuesdays, and you've been anyway. The Thyssen covers what the other two don't, and the Retiro is 15 minutes' walk away.

1

Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza

10:00

2.5 hours

€14

Start at the top floor with the oldest paintings and walk down through the centuries. It's the easiest museum in Madrid to follow.

🕒 Tue 10:00-19:00

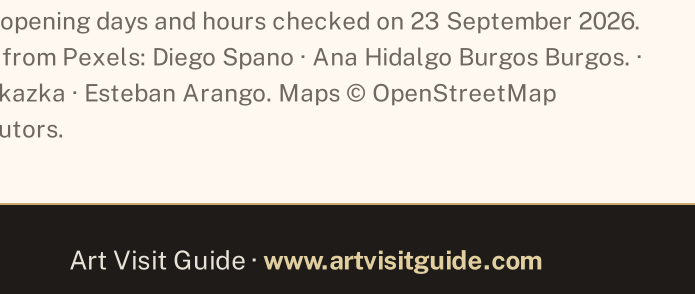
📅 €14, collection and exhibitions, on the day or online

[Open in Maps](#)

[Our Thyssen guide](#)

🚶 About 15 minutes' walk to the Retiro lake, lunch on the way

2



Retiro Park

13:30

as long as you like

Sit by the big lake under the Alfonso XII monument. The Palacio de Cristal is closed for works, but you can see the art installation that wraps it.

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☁ **Plan B.** Rain? Stay longer at the Thyssen, then go back to the Prado for its free last two hours, 18:00 to 20:00, at the ticket office.

DAY 3 · WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER

The Royal Palace and a marquis's house

Why this order. The Palace is booked for 10:00 and the Cerralbo closes at 15:00, so both fit in the morning. They're 13 minutes apart, and the afternoon is yours.

1

Royal Palace

10:00

1.5 hours

€18

The self-guided route through the state rooms takes about 45 minutes. Add 30 for the Royal Armoury. Leave big bags at the hotel: works are under way.

🕒 Oct-Mar: Mon-Sat 10:00-18:00, entry closes an hour earlier

📅 Timed ticket: €18 + €0.77 booking fee

DON'T MISS

- The Throne Room
- The Royal Armoury

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🚶 About 13 minutes' walk north to the Cerralbo

2

Museo Cerralbo

12:15

1 hour

€3

A 19th-century mansion kept with its furniture and collections in place. Few visitors, and a very Madrid way to end the trip.

🕒 Tue-Sat 9:30-15:00, last access 14:00 · closed Mondays

📅 €3 at the door. No advance sales

DON'T MISS

- The ballroom

[Open in Maps](#)

⇒ **Plan B.** No 10:00 palace slot left? Take any slot before 13:00 and swap the order: the Cerralbo first, it opens at 9:30.

ONE LAST THING

That's it. Three days, five visits, and the two biggest are free.

If something changes on the ground, a closure, a strike, a queue that isn't worth it, reply to my email and I'll help you rearrange.

And when you're back, tell me how it went. It's the only way I know what to plan better next time.

Sample plan. A real plan is built on your own dates.

Prices, opening days and hours checked on 23 September 2026.

Photos from Pexels: Diego Spano · Ana Hidalgo Burgos Burgos ·

Alina Skazka · Esteban Arango. Maps © OpenStreetMap contributors.