

CHRISTMAS PLANS GUIDE IN MADRID

Madrid turns into a bright, festive and welcoming city at this time of year. The streets fill up with traditional markets, stunning lights, cultural activities and food options for every taste. From Hard Rock Hotel Madrid, getting around is super easy: the city center is just 5 minutes away by metro, and many of the best Christmas plans are within walking distance.

Here's a clear and up-to-date guide so you can enjoy the season like a true local.

1. CHRISTMAS MARKETS IN MADRID

Madrid is filled with traditional markets, artisan stalls and modern pop-ups, perfect for holiday shopping, strolling and soaking up the atmosphere.

CLASSIC MARKETS

Plaza Mayor

- Dates: November 27th – December 31st
- Nearly 100 stalls with ornaments, nativity figures, lights and traditional items
- Lively and iconic atmosphere

Plaza de España – “La Navideña”

- Market + 600 m² ice rink
- Open until January 11th
- Wide space, ideal for families

Recoletos Artisan Fair

- Dates: December 1st – 30th
- Location: Paseo de Recoletos
- Over 150 artisans selling ceramics, jewelry, toys and unique gifts

Plaza Juan Goytisolo (Reina Sofía)

- Handcrafts, décor and an alternative vibe

Plaza Isabel II (Ópera)

- Traditional market with classic Christmas products

DESIGN & CONCEPT MARKETS

Mercadillo del Gato (Gran Vía, 13)

- Dates: December 12th – January 6th
- Sustainable fashion, crafts, jewelry, décor and local designers

Caleido Christmas Market (Cuatro Torres)

- Dates: December 12th – January 5th
- Design, food, emerging brands and a modern atmosphere

Mercado de Motores (Old Railway Station)

- Dates: December 13 – 14
- Local design, music, food and a very Madrid-style vibe

INTERNATIONAL & THEMATIC MARKETS

Swiss Ladies Market (Swiss Club)

- Dates: November 28th – 30th
- Cheese, raclette, mulled wine and traditional Swiss goods

Mercado de las Conchas (Torrelodones)

- Dates: December 13th – 14th
- Crafts, food and a countryside feel

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE MARKETS

- Mulled wine, punch and winter drinks
- Traditional sweets like turrón, polvorones and cookies
- Handmade gifts, Christmas décor and nativity sets
- Local design, emerging brands and sustainable products

2. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS IN MADRID

The Christmas lights switch on in late November and stay up until Epiphany. The city glows with creative displays decorating the main streets and squares.

MAIN LIT AREAS

Calle Alcalá (Cibeles to Sol)

- Classic arches and super photogenic spots
- A must for evening strolls

Pedestrian streets Arenal, Montera & Preciados

- Bright, continuous lighting
- Always lively and festive

Puente de Toledo

- Decorated like a “gift corridor”
- A great place for night photos

Gran Vía

- New light design every year
- Large illuminated tree near Alcalá–Gran Vía

Plaza Mayor

- Classic and traditional lighting
- Perfect for the most authentic Christmas atmosphere

OTHER NOTABLE DECORATIONS

Bravo Murillo

- Warm-lit winter garden theme

Retiro entrances & Calle Alcalá by Colón

- Decorative showcases and festive elements

Puerta del Sol

- Giant Christmas tree and one of the most photographed spots

Monumental light sculptures

- Menina
- Crown
- Snowman
- Located in key areas across the city

NAVILUZ: THE OFFICIAL CHRISTMAS BUS

- Dates: November 23th – January 6th
- Duration: approx. 50 minutes
- Route: Main illuminated streets, departing near the Prado Museum
- FREE (ticket required)
- Accessible
- Ideal for families and quick visits to see the lights

3. FREE CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES IN MADRID

Each district organizes its own Christmas program with nativity scenes, kids' workshops, concerts and street shows for all ages.

DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

Traditional nativity scenes

- Located in cultural centers, parishes and churches
- Classical, Hebrew-style and thematic displays

Kids' workshops

- Crafts, storytelling and creative activities
- Daily programming in squares and cultural centers

Street performances

- Music, animation, children's theater and roaming shows
- Flamenco zambombas and performances in central squares

Choral concerts

- Local choirs and groups such as Casa de los Musicales, Meraki or Amabile
- Performed in squares, parishes and cultural centers

HIGHLIGHTED EXAMPLES

Centro District

- Daily workshops and storytelling events
- Examples:
 - “Laura and the Magic Spells” at Plaza de la Corrala
 - “The Wish Fairy” in Lavapiés

Chamberí

- “The Christmas Carillon” on December 31st in Fuencarral
- Giant animated clock with shows at 18:00 and 19:30

Lavapiés & Embajadores

- Flamenco carols and zambombas
- Example: December 20th in Plaza Vara de Rey

Chamberí & surroundings

- Solidarity lottery event
- “Pre-grapes” celebration on December 13th at Plaza de Olavide with treats and party kits

NOTABLE NATIVITY SCENES

Galileo Cultural Center (Chamberí)

- Traditional Hebrew nativity
- Dates: November 29th – January 7th
- Includes “Nativity Scenes of the World” exhibition

Playmobil Nativity (Chamberí)

- Located in a local school
- Dates: December 1 – 22
- Very popular with families

Institutional nativity scenes

- Madrid City Hall
- Casa de México Foundation
- Beautifully curated and free to visit

GENERAL NOTES

- Free or donation-based
- Usually daytime or early evening (before 20:00)
- Held in central, well-connected areas
- No tickets required

4. CHRISTMAS IN MADRID FOR KIDS & FAMILIES

The city becomes extra magical for little ones: ice rinks, shows, workshops and themed events everywhere.

ICE RINKS

Matadero Madrid

- Dates: December 5th – January 6th
- Outdoor rink with skate rental

Cibeles Palace (Glass Gallery)

- Dates: December 13 – January 5
- Covered and very photogenic space

Plaza de España

- Open until January 11th
- One of the largest and busiest

Plaza de Colón (Javier Fernández rink)

- Dates: November 29th – January 6th
- Inspired by professional competitions

Madrid On Ice (Metropolitano Stadium)

- Dates: December 22th – January 11th
- Several rinks + themed activities

Puente de Vallecas

- Dates: November 27th – January 6th
- Local neighborhood rink with a family vibe

Approx. price

- €8–10 per session
- Booking ahead online recommended

FAMILY SHOWS & MUSICALS**Cortylandia**

- Dates: November 22th – January 5th
- Location: El Corte Inglés, Preciados
- Free show

Circo Price at Christmas

- Show: “*Dream Awake*”
- Dates: November 21th – January 6th
- Magic + acrobatics

Circlassica: Noël (IFEMA)

- Dates: October 31st – January 18th
- Circus-musical for all ages

Children’s musicals

- “Rudolph and Other Christmas Tales” – Teatro Sanpol
- “Christmas Dreams” – Teatro Rialto
- Book early for best seats

FREE KIDS’ ACTIVITIES**Christmas crafts workshops**

- In squares like Plaza de la Corrala or Salesas
- Decorations, wreath-making, masks, and creative activities

Arrival of Santa Claus

- December 19th at 7:00 PM
- Plaza de Olavide, accompanied by an elf parade

Royal mailboxes

- Located in several squares
- Example: Plaza de Barceló (Dec 27th)

Royal Messengers

- Dates: January 2–4
- Held in cultural centers
- Activities for kids to finish writing their letters

OTHER FAMILY-FRIENDLY PLANS

Parque de Atracciones – “Winterland”

- Dates: December 6 – January 4
- Themed rides and holiday shows

Mágicas Navidades (Torrejón de Ardoz)

- Dates: November 14 – January 6
- A holiday theme park with a fair, decorations, and live shows

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Arrive early: many activities fill up quickly
- Check schedules before going: some change daily
- For ice rinks and major shows, book in advance

5. CULTURAL CHRISTMAS IN MADRID

The city hosts a packed cultural lineup during the holidays: concerts, exhibitions, family shows, and beloved traditions that fill December with performances and local spirit.

CONCERTS & MUSIC PROGRAMMING

New Year’s Concert (Teatro Real)

- Date: January 5th
- This year featuring Mocedades and the Municipal Symphonic Band
- A seasonal classic in one of Spain’s most iconic venues

Classical & Choral Concerts

- Held all over the city
- In churches, auditoriums, and historic buildings
- Choirs, Christmas repertoire, and traditional music

Candlelight Christmas Concerts

- Hosted in venues like the Ateneo de Madrid
- Carols and classical pieces performed by candlelight
- Intimate atmosphere and very photogenic

MUSEUMS, EXHIBITIONS & TRADITIONS

Museum of Turrón (Casa 1880, Calle Arenal)

- Space dedicated to the history of turrón
- Ideal for families and lovers of tradition

Real Casa de Correos (Puerta del Sol)

- Christmas projection “Factory of Wishes”
- Dates: November 28th – January 6th
- Light show on the building façade

Madrid Cultural Traditions

- Christmas Lottery Draw
- San Silvestre Vallecana (December 31st), an iconic popular race
- New Year’s Eve in Puerta del Sol, with thousands gathering for the countdown

SHOWS FOR KIDS

Teatro Maravillas

- Show: “A Christmas Carol”
- Adaptation of Dickens’ classic

Teatro Rialto

- Show: “Christmas Dreams”
- Dates: November 22 – January 4
- Family-friendly holiday musical

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Christmas Train (Railway Museum)

- Dates: December 20th – 30th
- Themed ride with children’s entertainment

Royal Train (Príncipe Pío)

- Dates: December 20 – January 5
- Special journey with gift-giving
- A nostalgic, family-friendly experience

6. ORIGINAL CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCES IN MADRID

Beyond the classic plans, Madrid offers immersive installations, innovative events, and super visual attractions to enjoy the city in a fresh way.

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES & SPECIAL EVENTS

Avatar: The Experience (Espacio Delicias, Arganzuela)

- From November 26th
- Immersive journey inspired by Pandora
- Scenery, lights, and sensory experiences

Brilla Zoo (Getafe, Parque La Alhóndiga)

- From December 5th
- Illuminated animal figures at night
- Perfect for family walks and evening photos

Christmas at the Bernabéu (Santiago Bernabéu Stadium)

- Dates: December 24th – 31st
- Holiday installation inside the stadium
- Includes the world's largest snow globe and interactive shows

CREATIVE DECOR & DESIGN

Light Tree at Alcalá–Gran Vía

- One of the most photographed holiday spots
- Dynamic lighting and modern design

Sally Hambleton Floral Wreath (Gabriel Lobo)

- On display until December 8th
- Handcrafted decorative installation with a refined holiday feel

Fashion & Design Pop-Ups

- Temporary shops with artisan pieces
- Wreath-making workshops, décor, and design objects
- Available in various locations before Epiphany

7. PRACTICAL INFO FOR ENJOYING CHRISTMAS IN MADRID

Most holiday activities take place in the city center, making it easy to get around from Atocha and reach the main attractions quickly.

HOW TO GET AROUND FROM ATOCHA

Centro & Sol

- Line 1 from Atocha-Renfe gets you to Sol in about 5 minutes
- Perfect for markets, lights, and street shows

Colón – Preciados – Ice Rinks

- Metro Line 4
- Quick connection to shopping areas and kids' activities

Plaza de España

- Bus 51 or Metro Line 6
- Ideal for visiting “La Navideña” market and nearby events

Casa de Campo (Winterland)

- Madrid Cable Car
- Bus 33 as an alternative
- Large area with shows and family-friendly attractions

Getafe y Móstoles

- Commuter trains:
 - C3 and C4 to Getafe
 - C5 to Móstoles
- Great option for plans outside the city

Private transport

- Suitable for evening events, families, or tight schedules

TYPICAL OPENING HOURS

Christmas Markets

- 10:00 AM – 9:00 PM
- Weekends: until 10:00 PM

Christmas Lights

- Switch-on around 6:00 PM
- Until midnight (or 1:00 AM on some days)

Public Performances

- Around midday or early afternoon
- Includes concerts, street theatre, and kids' activities

Paid Events

- Theatre, circus, themed trains, and ice rinks
- Booking online in advance is recommended

Free Activities with Reservation

- Example: Naviluz, themed trains, municipal workshops
- Book early: spots fill fast

ACCESSIBILITY & USEFUL TIPS

Accessibility

- Most activities are wheelchair accessible
- The “Navidad Accesible Madrid” app offers audio guides and extra support

Smart Advice

- Dress warmly, nights get cold and outdoor events may involve waiting
- Visit markets early to avoid crowds
- Allow extra time for transport on busy days
- Check updated schedules before heading out