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 item
- Lively and iconic atmosphere

Plaza de España – "La Navideña"

- Market + 600 m^2 ice rink
- Open until January 11th
- Wide space, ideal for families

CLASSIC MARKETS

Plaza Isabel II (Ópera)

- Dates: December 4th – January 10th
- Traditional market with classic Christmas products

Plaza Juan Goytisolo (Reina Sofía)

- December 5th
- Handcrafts, decor and an alternative vibe

Hard Rock Hotel Madrid Market

- December 12th
- Art Market and Charity Bingo to support animal shelters

Recoletos Artisan Fair

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

DESIGN & CONCEPT MARKETS

Mercado de Motores (Old Railway Station)

- Dates: December 12th – 13th
- Local design, music, food and a very Madrid-style vibe

Mercadillo del Gato (Gran Vía, 13)

- Dates: December 4th – 13th
- Sustainable fashion, crafts, jewelry, décor and local designers

INTERNATIONAL & THEMATIC MARKETS

Swiss Ladies Market (Swiss Club)

- Dates: November 27th – 29th
- Cheese, raclette, mulled wine and traditional Swiss godos

Mercado de las Conchas (Torrelodones)

- Dates: November 21th – 22th
- 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 turned on November 21 and remain lit 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

Plaza de toros Las Ventas

- Árbol de Navidad en el exterior de la plaza

Puerta del Sol

- Giant Christmas tree and one of the most photographed spots

Monumental light sculptures

Located in key areas across the city

- Menina
- Crown
- Snowman

Retiro entrances & Calle Alcalá by Colón

- Decorative showcases and festive elements

NAVILUZ: THE OFFICIAL CHRISTMAS BUS

Dates: November 23th – January 7th

Duration: approx. 50 minutes
Route: Main streets are lit, exit onto Calle Alfonso XII, next to the Retiro

Features:

- Free (ticket required)
- Accessible
- Ideal for families and quick visits to see the lights

3. FREE CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES IN MADRID

Madrid offers a wide range of free Christmas activities. Each district creates its own program featuring nativity scenes, workshops, concerts, and shows designed 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

DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

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

Chamberí & surroundings

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

Chamberí

- "The Christmas Carillon" on December 31st in Fuencarral
- Giant animated clock with shows at 6pm and 7:30pm

Centro District

- Daily workshops and storytelling events

Please check the dates with our reception team

NOTABLE NATIVITY SCENES

Galileo Cultural Center (Chamberí)

- Traditional Hebrew nativity
- Includes “Nativity Scenes of the World” exhibition

Playmobil Nativity (Chamberí)

- Located in a local school
- Very popular with families

Institutional nativity scenes

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

Madrid History Museum

- Calle Fuencarral, 78

Consulta las fechas con nuestro equipo de recepción

GENERAL NOTES

- Free or donation-based
- Usually daytime or early evening (before 8pm)
- Held in central, well-connected areas
- No tickets required

4. CHRISTMAS IN MADRID FOR KIDS & FAMILIES

Madrid becomes especially magical for kids, with ice rinks, family-friendly shows, free workshops, and themed activities all across the city.

ICE RINKS

Matadero Madrid

- Dates: Until January 6th
- Outdoor rink with skate rental

Cibeles Palace (Glass Gallery)

- Dates: December 13th – January 5th
- Tickets from €6.50
- 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 27th – January 6th
- Inspired by professional competitions

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ICE RINKS (unconfirmed)

Madrid On Ice (next to the 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

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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 20th – January 6th
- Magic + acrobatics

Circlassica: Special Performances (IFEMA)

- Dates: October 30st – January 17th
- Circus-musical for all ages

Children’s musicals

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

FREE WORKSHOPS AND 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 2nd – 4th
- Held in cultural centers
- Activities for kids to finish writing their letters

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OTHER FAMILY-FRIENDLY PLANS

Amusement Park – "Winterland"

- Dates: December 6th – January 4th
- Check the dates with our team
- Themed attractions and Christmas shows

Mágicas Navidades (Torrejón de Ardoz)

- Dates: November 14th – January 10th
- 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
- A seasonal classic in one of Spain's most iconic venues

Classical & Choral Concerts

- 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

Traditional Nativity Scenes

- Displayed at Madrid City Hall and cultural centers
- Notable example: "Nativity Scenes of the World" at the Galileo Cultural Center

Tradiciones culturales madrileñas

- Christmas Lottery Draw
- San Silvestre Vallecana (December 31st), an iconic popular race

SHOWS FOR KIDS

Teatro Maravillas

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

Teatro Calderón

- Show: “Christmas Dreams”
- Dates: November 28nd – January 4th
- 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 19th – January 5th
- Special journey with gift-giving
- A nostalgic, family-friendly experience

Consulta las fechas con nuestro equipo de recepción

6. ORIGINAL CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCES IN MADRID

Beyond the traditional plans, Madrid offers innovative Christmas experiences, immersive installations, and highly visual activities to enjoy the city in a different way.

CREATIVE DECOR & DESIGN

Fashion & Design Pop-Ups

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

Artistic lighting (Carretas and Espoz y Mina streets)

- Christmas design by Suma Cruz
- Creations inspired by handcrafted design and ornamentation

Light Tree at Alcalá–Gran Vía

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

Christmas lighting on Calle del Arenal

- Designed by Bimani.
- A design with a contemporary aesthetic

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 & Gran Vía

- Line 1 from Atocha-Renfe gets you to Gran Vía in about 15 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

HOW TO GET AROUND FROM ATOCHA

Getafe & 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

Public Performances

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

Christmas Lights

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

Free Activities with Reservation

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

Paid events

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

Christmas Markets

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

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