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FREE GUIDE · MADRID

# Royal Palace of Madrid

Western Europe's largest royal palace: Giaquinto's Grand Staircase, the Tiepolo ceilings, the Gasparini Room and the Royal Armoury — the 7 must-see stops, in routes of 1, 1.5 and 2 hours

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## Your visit at a glance

**T**he Royal Palace of Madrid, also known as the Palacio de Oriente, is the official residence of the Spanish Crown, though the monarchs no longer live here: today it's reserved for State occasions. With some 135,000 m<sup>2</sup> and more than 3,400 rooms, it's the largest royal palace in Western Europe by floor area, so trying to see all of it is the perfect recipe for walking out exhausted. The trick: go straight for what really matters. This tour brings together the seven essential stops —Giaquinto's Grand Staircase, the Tiepolo ceilings, the Gasparini Room, the Gala Dining Room, the Royal Armoury and the Chapel with its Stradivarius instruments—, with the context to understand why they dazzle and routes of 1, 1.5 and 2 hours so you can choose according to the time you have. The visit is one-way: follow the numbers in the order of the circuit.

### At a glance

#### PRICE

€18 general · €9 reduced

#### HOURS

Mon–Sat 10am–6/7pm · Sun 10am–4pm

#### STOPS

The 7 must-sees

#### FREE ENTRY

Mon–Thu, last 2 h (EU & Ibero-America)

#### TIME

1.5-2 h (all 7 stops)

#### METRO

Ópera (L2, L5 and branch)



### Part of Tickets Visit

tickets-visit.com is part of Tickets Visit, the network of tickets and guides to monuments.

*With this free guide you already do a great visit: the essentials, with a route. If you want to make the most of it, at the end I'll show you the complete version.*

## Before you go in: book your skip-the-line ticket

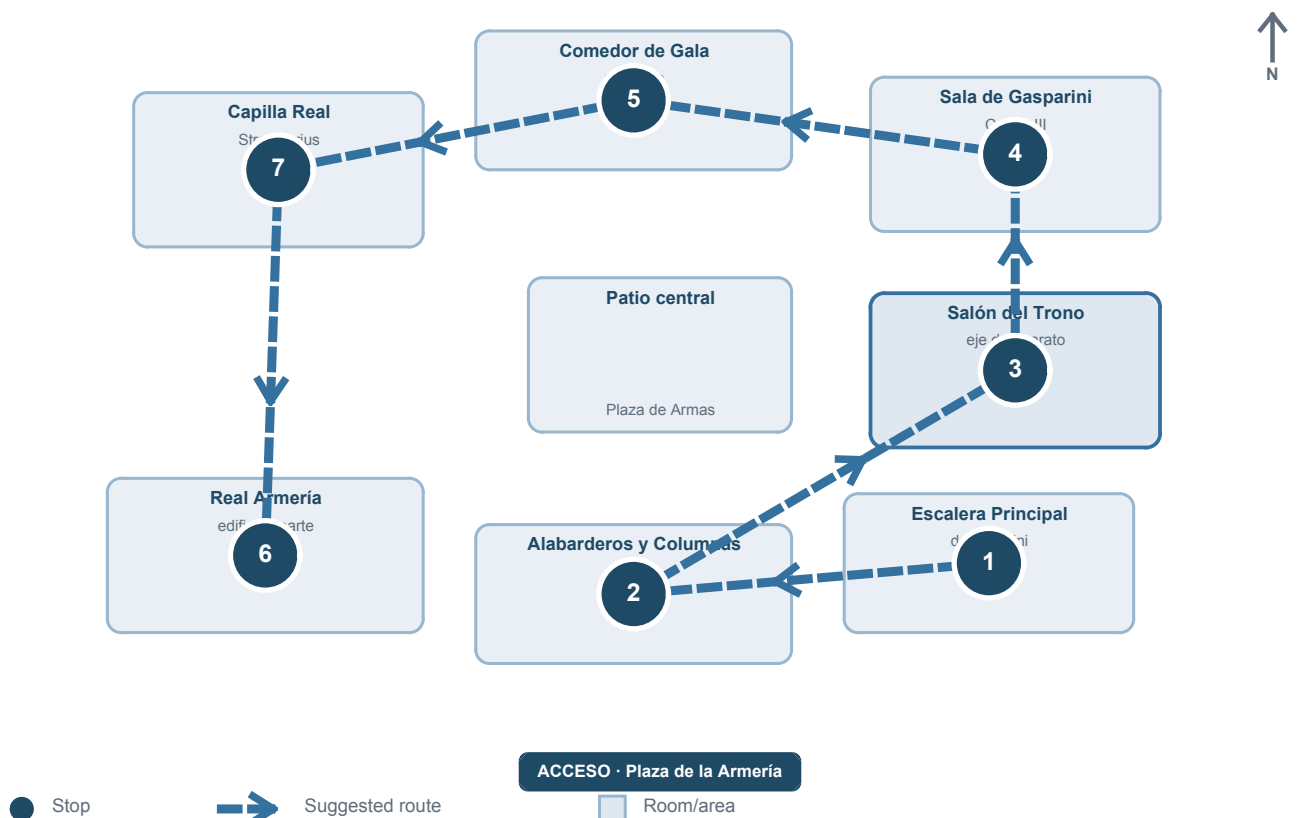
On Civitatis, with free cancellation. Skip the ticket-office queue.

» **Buy your ticket**

## The map and the route

You enter through the monumental Plaza de la Armería, between the palace and the Almudena Cathedral, with views over the Campo del Moro. The best of it starts right at the entrance hall: the Grand Staircase (1), with its Goya vault, climbs to the main floor. From there the circuit of state rooms unfolds one after another —Halberdiers and Columns (2), Throne (3), Gasparini (4), Gala Dining Room (5)— and finishes at the Royal Chapel and the Stradivarius instruments (7). If you're short on time, prioritise the Staircase, the Throne Room, Gasparini and the Armoury (1-hour route). The Royal Armoury (6) has its own entrance from the square: save it for the end or do it as you go in.

**PALACIO REAL DE MADRID · SALONES EN TORNO AL PATIO (ESQUEMA, NO A ESCALA)**



Se sube por la Escalera Principal (SE) y se recorre el anillo de salones del piso principal alrededor del patio central. La Real Armería es un edificio aparte, a nivel de la Plaza de la Armería. No a escala.

**Visiting order: 1 Grand Staircase › 2 Halberdiers and Columns › 3 Throne Room › 4 Gasparini Room › 5 Gala Dining Room › 6 Royal Armoury › 7 Royal Chapel and Stradivarius**

Schematic layout by area; the number shows the visiting order. Not to scale: follow the museum's own floor plans and signs on the day.

## THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

1

## Grand Staircase

Entrance hall, access to the main floor · 10 min

Sabatini's monumental staircase, a single flight that forks in two, crowned by a Giaquinto fresco. A theatrical prelude to the main floor, with marble lions and the statue of Charles III.



*The Grand Staircase with its vault frescoed by Corrado Giaquinto.*

Photo: José Luis Filpo Cabana · CC BY 3.0 ·  
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### WHAT TO LOOK AT

Stand at the foot of the first flight, right where the single run splits in two, and look up: from that exact spot Giaquinto's vault opens out entirely above your head.

### » IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: exactly what this theatrical staircase was designed for — and the whim of a newly arrived king that forced it to be rebuilt from scratch.

## THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

3

## Throne Room

Main floor, ceremonial axis · 15 min

A room of state with crimson velvet walls, mirrors and Tiepolo's great fresco on the power of the Spanish monarchy. Beneath the canopy, the thrones, guarded by gilt-bronze lions.



*The Throne Room with Tiepolo's fresco and the thrones beneath the canopy.*

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### WHAT TO LOOK AT

Tiepolo's vault, the thrones beneath the canopy and the four gilt-bronze lions.

### » IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: all the secrets of the palace's most dazzling room — and the bittersweet fate of the aged genius who painted its vault and never went home.

## THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

4

## Gasparini Room

Antechamber of Charles III · 10 min

A Rococo antechamber devised by Mattia Gasparini: floral stucco on the ceiling, walls of hand-embroidered silk and a marble floor that mirrors the design of the vault. A unified, dazzling whole.



*The Gasparini Room, the peak of Rococo in the Royal Palace.*

Photo: Joseolgon · CC BY 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons



### WHAT TO LOOK AT

The embroidered silk of the walls, the stucco of the ceiling and the marble floor that mirrors it.

### » IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: how the most hypnotic room in the palace was conceived — and the almost invisible craftsmanship that has kept it alive since the 18th century.

## THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

6

## Royal Armoury

South wing, from the Plaza de la Armería · 20 min

One of the finest armour collections in the world, with the royal arsenal from Charles V and Philip II. Engraved and gilded parade pieces, some portrayed by Titian, and displays of knights on horseback.



*The Royal Armoury, with the parade armours of the Habsburgs.*

Photo: Jose Luis Filpo Cabana · CC BY 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons



### WHAT TO LOOK AT

Look for the parade armour of Charles V that you'll recognise from Titian's equestrian portraits; and crouch down before the children's armour, made to measure for princes just a few years old.

### » IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

The full story of this stop (twice the text), its «ONE FACT» box and all 7 stops of the route, one by one.

## Practical tips

### Best times

Come first thing in the morning, right as it opens, to avoid the groups; bear in mind it may close in whole or in part for official events, so check before you go.

### Buy your ticket in advance

The Royal Palace is one of the most visited monuments in Madrid and the ticket queue in the Plaza de la Armería can be long, especially at weekends and on long holiday weekends. Buying your ticket online and booking a time slot saves you much of the wait; arrive a few minutes before your time.

### Getting in free

National Heritage offers a free window Monday to Thursday in the last two hours of opening, for citizens of the EU and Ibero-America; there are queues and limited capacity. Confirm the exact days and hours with National Heritage.

### With children

The Royal Armoury, with its suits of armour and its knights on horseback, tends to be the part that hooks the little ones most; save it for when they start to tire of the state rooms.

### Accessibility and services

The main entrance overcomes the changes in level with a lift and the route is mostly wheelchair accessible; there are toilets and a cloakroom for backpacks and large items. People with disabilities and under-5s enter free. Check the conditions and wheelchair loan with National Heritage.

### Combine it

On the way out you have the Almudena Cathedral right beside you, the Plaza de Oriente and the Teatro Real, and very close by the Sabatini Gardens and the Campo del Moro; all in the heart of historic Madrid.

### Practical info

Address: Calle de Bailén, s/n, 28071 Madrid. Metro: Ópera (lines 2, 5 and branch). Guide price (National Heritage): general admission around €18, reduced about €9 (ages 5 to 16, students up to 25 and over-65s with proof); under-5s and people with disabilities, free. Free window: Monday to Thursday in the last two hours of opening, for citizens of the EU and Ibero-America. Guide hours: Monday to Saturday 10:00 to 18:00 in winter and until 19:00 in summer; Sundays, only until 16:00; closed on some public holidays. IMPORTANT: prices and hours are indicative and the palace may close for official events without notice; always confirm them with National Heritage before your visit.

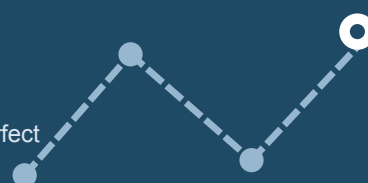
**Official website:** [www.patrimonionacional.es/visita/palacio-real-de-madrid](http://www.patrimonionacional.es/visita/palacio-real-de-madrid)

PLAN YOUR TRIP · FREE

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## Before you go in: book your skip-the-line ticket

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» **Buy your ticket**

## THE COMPLETE VERSION

## Take the complete visit

With this free guide you already cover the essentials. The PREMIUM is your complete visit to Royal Palace of Madrid: every work with its story, a 3-step looking guide for every painting, the cheat-sheet for your phone and the tips to skip the queues. For less than the price of a coffee.

In the free guide you miss out on:

- 2 Hall of the Halberdiers and Hall of Columns**  
Start of the circuit of state rooms · 10 min
- 5 Gala Dining Room**  
Northwest wing of the main floor · 10 min
- 7 Royal Chapel and the Stradivarius Instruments**  
Main floor, beside the circuit · 10 min

### PREMIUM Guide · Royal Palace of Madrid

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- ✓ All 7 works (the free guide has only 4), each with its story.
- ✓ «What it represents» and «How to look at it» in 3 steps: a looking guide for every painting.
- ✓ The «Route on one page» cheat-sheet for your phone, plus 1-, 2- and 3-hour routes.
- ✓ Contents, keys to understanding it, bios and expanded tips.
- ✓ As a PDF and offline: use it inside the museum without spending data.

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#### RISK-FREE GUARANTEE

If the guide doesn't help on your visit, write to us and we'll refund the €4.99. No questions asked.

*For comparison: a guided tour costs €30-60 per person. This guide walks you through with the same detail, everyone travelling with you can use it, and it's yours forever.*

### Still no ticket? Book skip-the-line

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» **Check availability and prices**

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