ESSENTIAL MUSEUMS in Spain

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INTRODUCTION

Spain is the perfect destination for enjoying art. There are over 1,500 museums and some of the most important collections in the world.

The blend of cultures and civilisations in mainland Spain has left a cultural heritage which is both vast and valuable. Here you can visit the extraordinary Paseo del Arte or Art Walk in Madrid with some of the best collections of paintings in the world. The Prado Museum, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum and the Reina Sofía Museum alone would justify a visit to Spain’s capital.

Exhibited here, as well as in other fascinating places like the Picasso Museum in Barcelona, the Dalí Theatre-Museum in Figueres and the Fine Arts Museum in Seville, you’ll find some of the best works by the greatest Spanish artists.

From Roman Hispania in the National Museum of Roman Art in Mérida to the latest trends in contemporary art in the Institut Valencià d’Art Modern (IVAM) in Valencia, the Guggenheim in Bilbao and the Pompidou Centre in Málaga, a visit to our museums is a truly rewarding journey through history.

Somewhere between the distant past and a promising future you have select works by masters of great stature like Velázquez, Murillo, Zurbarán and Goya, who symbolised the evolution of painting in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. At the beginning of the 20th century the modern art movement came to the fore, with leading players like Picasso, Juan Gris and Joan Miró. They were followed by the sculptural cubism of Julio González, the surrealism of Dalí and Maruja Mallo... and onto the unique works of Eduardo Chillida and Jorge Oteiza.

If you’d like to take advantage of your trip to Spain to discover some of these temples to art, then you’re in luck. Spain has excellent transport infrastructure so it’s really easy to get around, with numerous connections by plane, high-speed train and the freedom you enjoy from our comprehensive road network.

Come and discover museums which are a work of art in themselves and the artistic treasures they exhibit.
ESSENTIAL MUSEUMS IN SPAIN

10 ESSENTIAL MUSEUMS

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF EL PRADO

As you stroll along the lush Paseo del Prado, the oldest garden in the city, the first thing you see will be the slender, monumental building of the El Prado Museum. It is Neoclassical in style and surrounded by gardens and it is well worth stopping for a moment to admire the Doric façade, with numerous columns, medallions and female sculptures. You soon reach the statue of Velázquez, which gives the name to the gate which was originally exclusively for monarchs and dignitaries.

As you enter, you'll be surprised by a circle of columns capped by a dome in the centre of which stands an enormous 16th century bronze sculpture of Carlos V and the Fury. Nearby is the start of the great gallery, the focal point of the museum and the heart of El Prado. Here there is a blend of paintings by European great masters, sculptures and decorative objects.

If you're here for the day, the best thing is study each painting and hall in detail. But if you really don't have much
time, the museum’s website will suggest a number of short itineraries so you don’t end up missing the essential works. With a special pass (for groups of from 12 to 30 people), you can visit the museum exclusively before the doors open to the public.

The museum houses a good many works by Velázquez and Goya. The Triumph of Bacchus, Christ Crucified and The Spinners by Velázquez, and The Naked Maja, The Clothed Maja and The 3rd of May in Madrid, by Goya, are some good examples of these. Other outstanding Spanish artists in the collection include Murillo, Ribera, Morales and Sorolla.

Apart from Spanish painters, there are works by Italian, Flemish, French, German, Dutch and British grand masters... Some really well known like The Nobleman with his Hand on his Chest by El Greco, The Three Graces by Rubens, The Garden of Earthly Delights by Bosch and Adam and Eve by Dürer. Then there are works by Titian, Caravaggio, Raphael, Fra Angelico and Rembrandt, to name just a few, which make El Prado one of the best collections in the world.
To complete your visit, you should go to the museum's extension designed by the Spanish architect Rafael Moneo, where you'll find a café, the shop and a number of information points.

One of the most interesting features of the extension is the renovated Cloister of Los Jerónimos, a unique area displaying El Prado's excellent collection of sculptures and where new temporary exhibitions are held. The outer door is a work of art made of bronze by the sculptor Cristina Iglesias.

THE STAR OF THE SHOW

Las Meninas, Velázquez

Painted in 1656, it is one of the crowning works of Spanish and universal art. A masterpiece of layout and perspectives, where the artist challenges the customs of the time by painting himself together with the family of Philip IV of Spain and his servants. It is one of Velázquez' greatest works, in which he tried to capture the feeling of life and reality by painting an everyday scene from life in the Madrid Alcázar. It inspired Goya nearly two hundred years later to paint his famous work, Charles IV of Spain and His Family, which you can also see here.

For more information and to buy entry tickets, go to: www.museodelprado.es
REINA SOFÍA NATIONAL ART CENTRE MUSEUM

One of the best museums in Madrid is very near Atocha station and the Paseo del Prado. It was designed to be the continuation in time of the works exhibited in the Prado Museum, and exhibits modern and contemporary art in two unique, interconnected buildings.

The museum's main collection can be found in the Sabatini building, formerly an 18th century Madrid hospital. The most eye-catching feature is the twin steel and glass, panoramic lift towers. Get your camera ready, as you'll have wonderful views from the top of the tower over the square outside and part of the city.

Inside the gallery you'll find one of the finest collections of Spanish art, with important artists like Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró, Juan Gris and Antoni Tàpies. They are accompanied by important works by artists from all over the world and in every imaginable format, with contributions by Kandinsky, Francis Bacon, Diego Rivera, Robert Delaunay and Yves Klein.

This fascinating journey through contemporary Spanish art is divided into three separate itineraries: "The Irruption of the 20th Century: Utopias And Conflicts (1900-1945)", "Is the War Over? Art in a Divided World (1945-1968)" and "From Revolt to Postmodernity (1962-1982)."

Some of the incredible works on display are *Figure at the Window* and *The Great Masturbator* by Dalí; *Man with a Pipe* and *Painting (Snail, Woman, Flower, Star)* by Miró; *Pink Bells, Tattered Skies*, by René Magritte, and *Lying Figure*, by Francis Bacon, and so many more.

In the centre of the building there is a delightful gardened patio with fountains and sculptures, an ideal spot to relax for a while. You can then continue by visiting the new area designed by the French architect Jean Nouvel.
which features an enormous, triangular red ceiling. In the central courtyard you are greeted by a large Roy Lichtenstein statue. From here you can access the rest of the collection and the temporary exhibitions. On the first two floors you get first-hand experience of experimental and interactive art, with installations, performances and works which invite you to become a part of the artistic experience.

The Reina Sofía also organises numerous workshops, temporary exhibitions and cultural activities throughout the year. There is also an impressive public library on the ground floor in the Nouvel wing. The cafeteria-restaurant is an array of colours and flavours, you can enjoy a brunch on the terrace or a delicious dinner accompanied by a DJ in unique surroundings.

THE STAR OF THE SHOW
Guernica, Picasso

The most famous work in this museum is this enormous painting, and in the neighbouring halls you can also view sketches and photos depicting the creative process. The scene represented by Picasso in this historic painting was inspired by the bombing by German and Italian aircraft (who fought alongside the faction which rebelled against the Government of the Second Republic during the Spanish Civil War) of the Basque town which gave its name to the work. It is a true reflection of the era and its dramatic circumstances and the painting is an overwhelming out-cry against barbarity and war, which has become a universally recognisable icon.

For further information and the purchase of entry tickets go to: www.museoreinasofia.es
THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA MUSEUM

Almost at the start of the Paseo del Prado, very near the Neptuno Fountain, there is a lovely garden through which you can access this Museum which aims to provide a comprehensive presentation of Western art and the history of painting. It is located in Villahermosa Palace, an old, aristocratic stately home restored by Rafael Moneo, who has been able to create a beautiful museum that is totally adapted to modern times.

The collection reflects the tastes of its founders, the Thyssen-Bornemisza family, who have spent many years building up a collection which includes prominent works by Raphael, Titian, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Picasso, Juan Gris, Degas and Hopper, to name just a few from an impressive list of prominent artists. There are also sculptures by Auguste Rodin, a personal friend of the family.

You'll be amazed by the 3-dimensional effect of the Annunciation Diptych by Van Eyck. The artists tricks you into thinking that the figures are real statues made of stone. Admire Caravaggio's chiaroscuro technique in his painting of Saint Catherine of Alexandria and the
surprising pop art of *Woman in Bath* by Roy Lichtenstein, who adopted the language of the comic to revolutionise art in the 1960s.

The museum also provides several themed tours with an audio guide, such as a journey through the evolution of fashion, art in jewellery and gastronomy in painting, all of which are unique ways of experiencing the collection.

This museum completes the tour known as the Paseo del Arte or Art Walk. You can purchase a combined ticket to visit the permanent collections in the El Prado, Reina Sofía and Thyssen-Bornemisza museums, which will help you avoid having to queue up at each one.

You may also find Paseo del Arte imprescindible (Essential Art Walk) very practical. It is a free APP for mobile phones which functions as an audio guide covering 24 masterpieces in the three museums.

**FEATURED WORK**

*Swaying Dancer (Dancer in Green)*, Edgar Degas

The impressionists aimed to express the moment, capturing the light, colour and movement. And at this Degas was a true master. This can be seen in works like this which was painted with his characteristic pastel shades on paper, between 1877 and 1879. He was very interested in ballet as the study of the body in movement, and here the French artist reveals the influence of Japanese engraving and photography on his work, creating a scene which appears to be cut like a photograph taken from one of the theatre's boxes.

① For further information and the purchase of entry tickets go to: www.museothyssen.org
GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
BILBAO

The Guggenheim Museum looks like a titanium ocean-going liner anchored in the Bilbao Estuary. Each of the sides has a different façade resulting from the intricate shapes and forms created by the Canadian Architect, Frank Gehry. A sculptural structure which blends perfectly into the Bilbao skyline and the surrounding area, it has become an undisputed icon of the city.

The outside of the building is a work of art. The metallic reflective panels on the façade shine with different colours, depending on the time of day and the weather conditions. If you're already surprised by the Guggenheim's shapes, you'll be left speechless by the gigantic sculptures like Puppy, the iconic dog by Jeff Koons that stands guard in front of the museum, and The Tall Tree and The Eye, a creation by Anish Kapoor composed of 80 stainless-steel spheres.

Once inside, you'll discover one of the world's most unique museums. The Guggenheim's three levels are organised around a central atrium. Gehry uses titanium, glass and limestone to connect the different areas via curved walkways, lifts and towered staircases. In this museum no two galleries are the same. This means that you are constantly being surprised, alternating large-format works with others which are much more intimate.
The permanent collection starts with the second half of the 20th century, taking us right up to the present and may be defined as contemporary art in capital letters. Here you’ll find, for example, a pop image of Marilyn Monroe repeated in series by Andy Warhol, contrasting with Barge, a large-format silkscreen on canvas by Robert Rauschenberg. The list of prominent artists present in the Guggenheim is endless: Miquel Barceló, Antoni Tàpies, Anselm Kiefer, Gerhard Richter, Jean-Michel Basquiat, James Rosenquist... There are also sculptures by the Basque masters Eduardo Chillida and Jorge Oteiza.
You really shouldn’t miss *The Matter of Time* by Richard Serra. Eight enormous steel sculptures which invite you to walk around them and discover their interior with absolute freedom. Examining the narrow passageways and winding curves is an unforgettable experience. The works are displayed in a majestic, column-free gallery, the largest in the whole museum. Experience the feeling of movement which emanates from each piece, then climb up to the lookout point to look at them from above.

To make your experience as comprehensive as possible, the museum has a visitor centre, a shop, a bookshop, a café, a bistro-type restaurant and a gastronomic restaurant with one Michelin star where you can enjoy real culinary works of art.

A really surprising way to enjoy the collection is to experience Art After Dark. One Friday each month you can experience the feeling of seeing the exhibitions at dawn in the company of some of the best DJs in the world.

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**THE STAR OF THE SHOW**

*Maman*, Louise Bourgeois

A walk amongst the sharp legs of the giant bronze, steel and marble spider which is displayed at the rear of the museum is quite an experience. Its disturbing aspect embodies a number of meanings. According to this French artist, it symbolises the two sides of maternity, it is both a cage and a shelter.

For further information and the purchase of entry tickets go to: www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus
PICASSO MUSEUM
BARCELONA

A stroll through the magical, narrow alleyways of the Gothic Quarter will take you to the Calle de Montcada, where you’ll find this gallery which is essential for any visit to Barcelona. The Picasso Museum occupies five Gothic mansions from the 13th and 14th centuries which have been appropriately restored and refurbished to provide total immersion in the life and works of this genius from Málaga.

During his childhood and early years, Picasso had an intimate connection with Barcelona, the city to which Jaume Sabartés, his secretary and friend, donated his collection of works from this period of apprenticeship and from the last years of his life. The museum gives you the chance to discover the strong links Picasso had with the city. You’ll be surprised by his dexterity and the strength of his lines when he was only 15 years old, in one of his first self-portraits and those depicting his parents.

As you visit the different galleries comprising these five mansions, you can accompany Picasso as he progressively increases his mastery of techniques and artistic styles, with such representative works as *Harlequin, Science and Charity* and the Cubist series of *Las Meninas*, a critical study of the famous painting by Velázquez.
You really shouldn’t miss the sketches for *Guernica*, his most important work, his beautiful ceramics and the collection of engravings exhibited in another of the galleries.

To complement the magnificent works displayed in the museum, there is a bookshop with a comprehensive selection of books, objects and souvenirs based on the most emblematic works of this genius from Málaga.

The Picasso Museum may also be the starting point for the Picasso Route in Barcelona, a tour of the different places where he lived with his family, his first painting studio, and the Giants' Frieze on the façade of the Catalonia College of Architects.

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**THE STAR OF THE SHOW**

**The Wait (Margot), Picasso**

An explosion of colour depicting the Parisian nightlife that Picasso discovered at the beginning of the 20th century. Take a closer look at this mysterious woman dressed in red and focus on the broad brushstrokes and the black silhouette around the body, influenced by Van Gogh and Toulouse-Lautrec.

For further information and the purchase of entry tickets go to: www.museopicasso.bcn.cat
INSTITUT VALENCIÀ D’ART MODERN, IVAM

Opposite the park in the Turia Gardens, the IVAM building houses some of Spain’s best contemporary works of art. Visit the translucent galleries, with huge windows providing so much light, and discover great works of art by the sculptor Julio González and the painter Ignacio Pinazo, essential points of reference for the beginning of the modern era in Spain.

If you're interested in the most up-to-date contemporary art, then you'll love the temporary exhibitions displaying the latest video art and the most fashionable artistic trends. If you prefer something a little more classical, its collection of works by historical avant-garde artists is one of the most important in Spain, with international personalities like Jean Arp, Alexander Calder, Paul Klee, Robert Delaunay... It would not be complete without pop art and other artistic expressions which have arisen since the 1960s and 1970s.
The IVAM’s collection includes all the artistic disciplines. Apart from painting and sculpture, there are galleries dedicated to graphic design, photomontage and photography by some of the 20th century’s masters like Man Ray, Robert Capa and Brassai.

But perhaps the most surprising gallery in the museum is the Sala de la Muralla, used for temporary exhibitions. In the centre of the gallery, and crossing it from end to end, there are the preserved remains of the old medieval city wall of Valencia. A sharp contrast between the city’s historical past and the contemporary works of art hanging on the walls.

After your visit, nothing could be better than to take a drink on the nice terrace with lovely views of the surrounding Turia Gardens.
THE STAR OF THE SHOW

*Woman in the Mirror*, Julio González

This cubist sculpture contains all the characteristics of Julio González who was considered to be "the master of iron". This artist, who collaborated with Picasso in the 1930s, put all his imaginative spirit into artistically welding iron sheets and bars. You could spend hours contemplating this major work of modernist sculpture, in which the profile of a woman reflected in the mirror can be discerned amongst abstract forms and different perspectives. It is part of the exhibition entitled *Constellations by Julio González. Between Representation and Abstraction*, which you can see in Gallery 2 of the museum by booking beforehand.

For further information and the purchase of entry tickets go to: www.ivam.es
DALÍ THEATRE-MUSEUM
FIGUERES

Going into the Dalí Theatre-Museum is like looking through the keyhole into this brilliant artist's subconscious.

More than a museum, this is an incredible journey to the heart of surrealism, the definitive work of art by the most elusive Spanish artist.

You’ll see it raining inside a car, Mae West’s lips turned into a sofa and amazing jewels in the form of an elephant. A dream, an illusion, or the largest surrealist object in the world? All this and so much more.

Here, nothing is what it seems to be. All the works have a double meaning, big and small secrets which are an essential feature of the experience of visiting the galleries without a pre-established route.

"I am surrealism", he declared, and this unique museum is proof of that. He designed it himself over what were the ruins of the Figueres Municipal Theatre, there are golden bread loaves on the façade and a parapet topped by giant eggs which is just a precursor for the outrageous experience which awaits you inside.

You won’t find any explanatory panels and there is no chronological order for you to follow. All the stages of his artistic career are represented, from his early impressionist, pointillist and futurist creations, to the surrealist installations and paintings from the final years of his life. Dalí himself is buried here, in a crypt below the stage under a great slab of granite.
Just let yourself go and look at it through the eyes of a child looking for games, symbols and dialogues between the different works created by Dalí.
The surprises are never ending: a huge glass geodesic dome that lights up the night sky, a deconstructed portrait of Abraham Lincoln which recomposes when looked at through a lens, large golden mannequins in different postures... And constant reminders of Gala, who was his life-long muse and companion.

Apart from the works by Dalí, in the Gallery of Masterpieces you can enjoy part of his private collection, with works by some of his favourite artists, including Meissonier, El Greco, Marcel Duchamp and Bouguereau. An extension to the building houses another treasure of incalculable value: a collection of jewellery designed by this genius born in Empordà, with precious stones transformed into fantastic designs.

THE STAR OF THE SHOW
Mae West Room, Salvador Dalí

Art was just a toy in Dalí’s hands. This can be seen here, where he converted the American actress’s face into a furnished apartment: the eyes are two paintings of the Seine, a chimney represents the nose and a sofa becomes her mouth. You can walk around the apartment and observe each detail from close up and then climb the stairs to view the portrait of the Hollywood star in three dimensions through a special magnifying glass.

For further information go to: www.salvador-dali.org/es/museos/
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ROMAN ART
MÉRIDA

Avant-garde architecture and the distant Roman past converge in this extraordinary museum designed by Rafael Moneo. Here you’ll discover different aspects of daily life for the inhabitants of one of the main settlements in Roman Hispania, Augusta Emerita, which was declared a World Heritage City by the UNESCO.

Mérida was named to honour the Emperor Augustus, and in its streets and most important monuments it still preserves the glorious memory of what would become the capital of Lusitania. Very near the Roman theatre and amphitheatre, and connected to them by a series of galleries, the National Museum of Roman Art (MNAM) is a surprising contrast between the orange-coloured city walls and the brickwork on which the pieces are exhibited.

The building consists of spacious volumes, with numerous slender arches and spectacular roof lighting. It is the perfect scenario for a tour through Roman gods, imperial busts and sculptural portraits, and all kinds of archaeological remains recovered from the city. Special mention should go to the mosaics, like the enormous Mosaic of the Chariot Drivers. It is one of the largest they have found in Mérida and it has been given this name because it represents two horse-drawn chariots.

The MNAM is on four floors and there are 30 extraordinary monographic galleries. Once you have crossed the Roman road, take the stairs down to the crypt and see the faithful reconstruction of a Roman room with murals representing spectacles from the Roman circus.
THE STAR OF THE SHOW

Boar Hunt mosaic

Roman mosaics were used as flooring in wealthy houses and public spaces. This enormous mosaic was discovered in what is known as the "Villa de las Tiendas", and represents a hunting scene, one of the pleasures of the wealthier citizens of Augusta Emeritus. Take a close look and you'll appreciate the thousands of tiny cubes of stone called tessellae required to complete the image.

For further information and the purchase of entry tickets go to: turismoextremadura.com/viajar/turismo/es/explora/Museo-Nacional-de-Arte-Romano-MNAR/

DOMUS ROMANA, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ROMAN ART, MÉRIDA
ESSENTIAL MUSEUMS IN SPAIN

POMPIDOU CENTRE, MÁLAGA

The Costa del Sol is renowned worldwide for its wonderful climate, fine sandy beaches and its yacht marinas. But in addition to these irresistible attractions, the capital city, Málaga, has intriguing museums like the Pompidou Centre, the first branch of this celebrated Parisian institution outside France.

Surrounded by the beautiful gardens of the Paseo España, the blue of the Mediterranean and the modern Muelle Uno shopping area, you’ll find this extraordinary building crowned by a dazzling, coloured-glass cube.

Take the stairs down to the large, underground galleries where you’ll find a blend of every artistic discipline. It is the works that play a leading role and they can be viewed freely or with the help of the centre’s specialised team of mediators to make this a participatory experience.
Here, the architecture takes a discreet second place. And it’s no wonder, because the journey through 20th and 21st century art displayed in its translucent galleries includes great artists like Marc Chagall, René Magritte, Frida Kahlo and Francis Bacon. And, of course, Pablo Picasso, born in Málaga and present in the Pompidou with works like A Hat with Flowers.

There are more than 70 works in the permanent collection which belong to the Pompidou Centre in Paris and they stand alongside groundbreaking contemporary works of art. The exhibition is renewed every two-and-a-half years and there are two or three temporary exhibitions each year. So each time you come you’ll be able to discover a new world of sensations and artistic experiences.

**THE STAR OF THE SHOW**

*La vecchia dell’orto (The Old Lady in the Garden)*

Frank Stella

The American painter and engraver, Frank Stella, juxtaposes sculptural forms like cones, pillars, curves and other architectural elements in this abstract work from the mid-1980s. You’ll be surprised by the composition's sharp relief created with acrylic paint, glycerophthalic lacquer and fluorescent paint over eleven elements and an alveolar aluminium panel. It is part of a *Modern Utopias* exhibition, which revolves around great historical events in the 20th and 21st centuries which have left their mark and nurtured the imagination and ideals of modern and contemporary artists.

For further information and the purchase of entry tickets go to: www.malagaturismo.com/es/recursos-turisticos/detalle/centre-pompidou-malaga/910
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS IN SEVILLE

In a delightful little square in the historical centre of Seville stands a magnificent building, formerly the Convent of La Merced Calzada, which is just begging you to come in and discover the greatest treasures of Spanish Baroque painting.

The peaceful patios with fountains and columns, passageways and trellised little corners and the extraordinary staircase create an ideal atmosphere for enjoying some of our country’s most exceptional religious paintings and sculptures.

The building has the atmosphere of a convent which surrounds and captures you with extraordinary tiled panels covering the richly decorated walls, vaults and ceilings and works of art by three of the greatest artists in 16th and 17th century Spain, known as the Golden Age: Zurbarán, Valdés Leal and, above all, Murillo.
Laid out in chronological order, from the Middle Ages to the 20th century, the galleries are ideal for viewing large-format works and also include decorative arts with ceramics, precious metals, weapons and furniture.

In the splendid Gallery V, you’ll be drawn to the beauty and strength of Murillo’s Baroque paintings. His *Immaculate Conception* (known as *La Colosal*) demonstrates his command of the gyratory movement of the body and clothes. The gems of the permanent collection of paintings include a portrait of the son of *El Greco* painted by his father, *Apostle’s Head* by Velázquez and a small portrait by Goya.

Admission is free for citizens of the European Union. A unique opportunity to see the masterpieces of Spanish religious art firsthand.

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**The Annunciation, Murillo**

Murillo plays a leading role in the exhibition as the greatest exponent in the history of Sevillian art. In this masterpiece, which used to be part of the famous altarpiece in the Convent of Los Capuchinos, the artist creates an interplay between light, colour and juxtaposition of the earthly and the celestial.
OTHER MUSEUMS THAT WILL SURPRISE YOU

Abstract art, science, toys, miniatures and even underwater. In Spain there are so many museums of such different types that any trip here becomes an incredible opportunity to immerse yourself in our culture.

The first thing you notice about the MUSAC (Castile-Leon Museum of Contemporary Art) is the façade which is made out of stained glass. The building was awarded the 2007 Mies van der Rohe architecture prize by the European Union and stands as a tribute to the stained-glass windows in León Cathedral. In the interior you'll find the latest in contemporary art and a strong link between local artists and recent international trends.

Who would have thought that in the interior of the Hanging Houses, the most iconic buildings in Cuenca, you'd find abstract paintings? These 15th century buildings with wooden balconies hanging out over the Huécar River valley are home to the Museum of Spanish Abstract Art. Its collection of paintings and sculptures by Spanish artists from the generation of the 1950s and 1960s contrasts very sharply with the historical surroundings and natural landscapes of Cuenca.

1 www.musac.es

1 www.march.es/arte/cuenca
Culture in Madrid goes well beyond the Paseo del Arte art walk. As you walk around the city you’ll come across small and large art galleries to suit all tastes. Some of them, like the **Sorolla Museum**, located in the family home of the artist from Valencia, are so lovely that one visit will probably not be enough. The garden, designed by Sorolla himself, is a true oasis far from the hustle and bustle of the city. Apart from some of his most significant paintings and drawings, there are a number of objects he collected during his lifetime on display, like sculptures, ceramics, jewellery and old photos.

If you're looking for surprises then you really should visit the avant-garde City of Arts and Sciences in Valencia, the great galleon in the Barcelona Maritime Museum or perhaps the San Sebastián Aquarium Museum. The Perfume Museum in Barcelona, with over 5,000 containers originating from every culture and era, and the Astorga Chocolate Museum (León) are just some of the extraordinary museums you'll find in mainland Spain.

For further information go to:
www.españaecultura.es
www.spain.info
But perhaps the most unusual museum in the whole of Spain is the **Lanzarote Atlantic Museum** in the Canary Islands. It's an art gallery under the sea, where you'll have to dive down amongst shoals of sardines, octopuses and sea sponges to discover the 12 figures installed by the North American artist Jason deCaires Taylor. The figures, inspired by the inhabitants of the island of Lanzarote, are a call in defence of the oceans against contamination. And they are constructed with pH neutral materials so they are adapted to marine life and will ultimately generate an artificial reef.

**For further information go to:**

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