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FREE GUIDE · MADRID

Reina Sofía Museum

Guernica, Dalí, Miró and Cubism — in a one-hour tour

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entradasreinasofia.es · August 2026 edition · unofficial website

Your visit at a glance

The Reina Sofía is Spain's great museum of 20th-century art. Its jewel is Picasso's Guernica, but it also holds Dalí, Miró and Cubism. The trick to enjoying it without stress is to go for the essentials and in the right order: start with Guernica first thing in the morning and follow the route.

At a glance

PRICE
€12 general

FREE ENTRY
Mon & Wed–Sat 7–9pm · Sun 12:30–2:30pm

HOURS
Closed on Tuesdays

TIME
1-2 h

WORKS HERE
The 7 must-sees

METRO
Estación del Arte (L1)

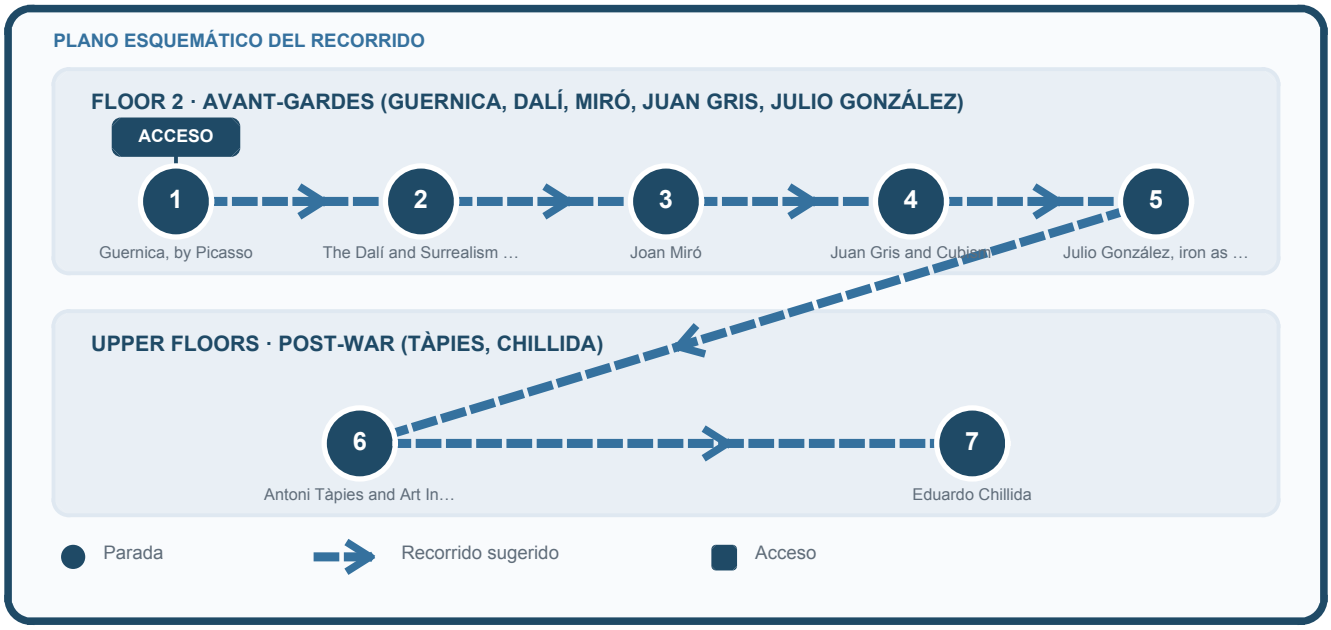
Part of Tickets Visit
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With this free guide you already do a great visit: the essentials, with a route. If you want to make the most of it, at the end I'll show you the complete version.

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

The essentials are on the 2nd floor of the Sabatini building, in rooms that surround the central courtyard. Come in through the lifts, head straight for Guernica and follow the route in blue: Dalí, Miró, the Cubism of Juan Gris and the sculpture of Julio González. The post-war period (Tàpies) and contemporary sculpture (Chillida) are spread across the upper floors of the Sabatini, currently being rehung: use the museum map on the day of your visit.



Visiting order: 1 Guernica › 2 Dalí › 3 Miró › 4 Juan Gris › 5 Julio González › 6 Tàpies › 7 Chillida

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 Guernica, by Picasso

Room 205.10 · Sabatini, 2nd floor · 15 min

It's the most famous work of 20th-century art and the museum's jewel. Picasso painted it in barely a month in 1937, commissioned by the Republican Government, after the bombing of the Basque town of Gernika. It's nearly 8 metres wide and a scream in black and white, without a single drop of colour. It was exiled at MoMA in New York until Spain recovered democracy: it returned in 1981.



Gernika in ruins after the 1937 bombing, the event that inspired the painting.
Public domain · Wikimedia Commons

WHERE TO LOOK

The black and white (like the press that broke the news), the bull, the wounded horse in the centre —notice how its body is striped as if it were printed newspaper—, the eye-shaped light bulb, the mother with her dead child and the figure burning on the right. There's no colour: it's pure mourning.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: the preparatory sketches and Dora Maar's photos of the process, Picasso's famous reply to a Nazi officer and why the UN tapestry ended up covered. Plus the exact order to see it without queues.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

2 The Dalí and Surrealism rooms

Avant-garde collection · same floor · 15 min

The Reina Sofía holds one of the finest collections of Salvador Dalí. Here you'll see his leap from academic detail to the most provocative Surrealism of the late 1920s, with his famous 'paranoiac-critical method': double images, soft forms and the landscapes of his native Cadaqués loaded with symbols and obsessions. The gateway to Spanish Surrealism.



Cadaqués (Girona), Dalí's home town and the backdrop to many of his paintings.

Photo: Berthold Werner · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

DON'T MISS THIS

The Cadaqués landscapes, the double images (look twice at every painting) and the obsessive symbolism. Look out for 'The Great Masturbator' or 'Girl at the Window'.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: which specific works to look for ('The Great Masturbator', 'Girl at the Window', 'The Endless Enigma'), his Portlligat period with Gala and the reason behind the 'paranoiac-critical method'.

3 Joan Miró

Avant-garde collection · 15 min

Miró invented a language all his own, recognisable in an instant: flat backgrounds, pure colours and a vocabulary of signs —stars, birds, women, the moon— reduced to the essentials. Close to Surrealism but always his own man, he said he wanted to 'murder' traditional painting. He's the luminous, joyful counterpoint to the drama of Guernica: if Guernica is the scream, Miró is the game.



'Dona i Ocell' (Barcelona): Miró's universe of signs and colour, taken out into the street.

Photo: PierreSelim · CC BY 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons

IN DETAIL

The economy of forms: with very little he says a great deal. The blue, the black line and the symbols that repeat from one painting to the next.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: his sculptures and ceramics, the story of the 'Constellations' and how to read his alphabet of signs (the eye, the star, the bird, the woman) from one work to the next.

4 Juan Gris and Cubism

Avant-garde collection · 10-15 min

Alongside Picasso and Braque, the Madrid-born Juan Gris was one of the greats of Cubism. Here you'll see above all synthetic Cubism: still lifes in which a guitar, a newspaper or a bottle are broken down into planes and reassembled with colour and even scraps of pasted paper (papier collé). Luminous and orderly, it's the perfect note on which to close the avant-garde tour.



Juan Gris, 'Still Life before an Open Window' (1915). Work in the public domain.

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LOOK FOR THIS

How an object (guitar, bottle, newspaper) breaks up into planes and reassembles. Look for the letters and the scraps of pasted paper.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: his life in the Montmartre of Paris alongside Picasso, the papier collé technique and why Kahnweiler considered him the most rigorous Cubist.

Practical tips

Best times
First thing, at opening (around 10:00) from Wednesday to Friday, is the quietest. Avoid midday, weekends and public holidays.

Buy your ticket in advance
Although the Reina Sofía has shorter queues than the Prado, at weekends and on public holidays the box office fills up. Getting your ticket online saves you the line and secures your time slot. Arrive a few minutes before your time and, if you go during the free window, allow some margin.

Getting in free
There are free windows: Monday and Wednesday to Saturday from 19:00 to 21:00, and Sunday from 12:30 to 14:30. The times are indicative: confirm them when booking or on the museum's website.

With children
It's manageable if you stick to the essentials (this tour). Guernica usually hooks them with its size and its story. Turn Miró's signs into a game of spotting stars, birds and moons.

Accessibility and services
The museum is wheelchair accessible and offers chairs on loan; there's free entry for people with disabilities and one companion. There's a cloakroom for large backpacks, a café and a bookshop-store in the Nouvel building: a good spot for a break.

Combine it with the Prado
You're right in the middle of the Art Walk: the Prado and the Thyssen are 10-15 minutes away on foot. If you're going to see more than one, the Art Walk combined ticket pays off.

Practical info
Address: Calle de Santa Isabel, 52, 28012 Madrid (Sabatini building). Metro: Estación del Arte (L1), next to Atocha. Guide price: general admission €12. Free windows: Monday and Wednesday to Saturday from 19:00 to 21:00, and Sundays from 12:30 to 14:30. Hours: open Monday to Saturday and Sundays with reduced hours; closed on Tuesdays. There's an Art Walk combined ticket, shared with the Prado and the Thyssen. Always check on the official website before you go, as hours, prices and the location of the works can change (the collection is being rehung).

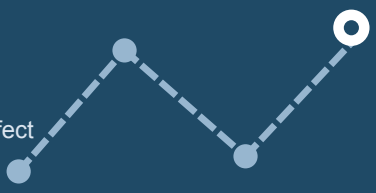
Official website: www.museoreinasofia.es

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The Tickets Visit Planner

Build your day-by-day route, discover what to see nearby and plan the perfect itinerary around the city. Free, no sign-up.

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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 Reina Sofía Museum: 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:

5 **Julio González, iron as drawing**
Avant-garde collection · floor 2 · 10 min

6 **Antoni Tàpies and Art Informel**
Spanish post-war art · Sabatini (collection being rehung) · 15 min

7 **Eduardo Chillida**
20th-century sculpture · Sabatini (collection being rehung) · 10 min

PREMIUM Guide · Reina Sofía Museum

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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.
- The timeline, the keys, the artist bios and a glossary to understand it all.
- As a PDF and offline: use it inside the museum without spending data.

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If the guide doesn't help on your visit, write to us and we'll refund the €6.99. 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.

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» **Check availability and prices**

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