

TRANSPORT

Getting to Madrid couldn't be easier with the city served by almost 100 airlines, excellent bus networks and trains that radiate into and out from the Spanish capital. The environmentally conscious also have an increasing number of options with the ongoing expansion of Spain's high-speed rail network – the early-2008 inauguration of the high-speed rail link between Madrid and Barcelona has brought Madrid that much closer to the rest of Europe.

Moving around the city is even simpler, with Madrid's extensive, modern metro system all you're likely to need. There are also plenty of buses, as well as reasonably priced taxis.

Flights, tours and rail tickets can be booked online at lonelyplanet.com.

AIR

Madrid's Barajas airport is Europe's fourth busiest hub, trailing only London-Heathrow, Paris Charles de Gaulle and Frankfurt, although it's rapidly closing in on the latter.

In addition to flights from the rest of Europe there are direct intercontinental flights from Asia, North and South America; some flights from North America involve a change at another major European hub en route.

Major low-cost airlines operating out of Madrid include easyJet, Air Berlin, Ryanair

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

and Vueling. These airlines work on a first-come, first-serve basis: the earlier you book a flight the less you pay. These no-frills airlines skip extras, such as in-flight meals (although you can buy snacks).

Domestic air travel can be expensive, but things are definitely changing. Iberia, Air Europa and Spanair, who once had a stranglehold over the market, now compete with many other international low-cost airlines on a limited number of domestic routes out of Madrid. Carriers and routes include easyJet (Oviedo, Fuerteventura, Ibiza, La Coruña and Lanzarote), Ryanair (Barcelona and Santander), Air Berlin (Palma de Mallorca) and Vueling (Barcelona, Canary Islands, Menorca, Santiago de Compostela and Jeréz).

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motor transport generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the greenhouse gases they are responsible for with contributions to energy-saving projects and other climate-friendly initiatives in the developing world – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

Airlines

Increasingly airlines have abandoned their shopfront offices in Madrid so, in most cases, you'll have to go online, call the following numbers or contact a travel agent. The following are among the more popular airlines.

Aer Lingus (☎ 902 502 737; www.aerlingus.com)

Air Berlin (☎ 902 320 737; www.airberlin.com) German budget airline with flights to Madrid from around 20 cities across Western Europe.

Air Europa (☎ 902 401 501; www.aireuropa.com) Connects Madrid with Budapest, Milan, Prague, Paris, Rome, Warsaw and Venice, as well as destinations in Africa, the Caribbean, South America and dozens of Spanish airports.

Air France (☎ 902 207 090; www.airfrance.com)

Alitalia (☎ 902 100 323; www.alitalia.it)

American Airlines (☎ 902 115 570; www.aa.com) Flies to Madrid from New York and other US cities.

Austrian Airlines (☎ 902 257 000; www.aa.com)

British Airways (☎ 902 111 333; www.britishairways.com)

British Midlands (☎ 902 100 737; www.bmbaby.com) Connects Madrid to Birmingham and Manchester.

Cathay Pacific (☎ 91 296 04 16; www.cathaypacific.com) Flies Hong Kong–Madrid with connections throughout Asia.

Continental Airlines (☎ 900 961 266; www.continental.com) Daily flights to New York with connections to other US cities.

EasyJet (☎ 807 260 026; www.easyjet.com) Flies to Madrid from 18 European cities.

German Wings (☎ 91 625 97 04; www.germanwings.com) Flies to Madrid from Stuttgart.

Iberia (☎ 902 400 500; www.iberia.es)

KLM (☎ 902 222 747; www.klm.com)

Lufthansa (☎ 902 883 882; www.lufthansa.com)

Malev Hungarian Airlines (☎ 902 101 445; www.malev.hu)

MyAir.com (www.myair.com) Italian low-cost airline flying to Madrid from Bari and Milan.

Qatar Airways (☎ 902 627 070; www.qatarairways.com) Madrid–Doha and connections across the Middle East.

Royal Air Maroc (☎ 902 210 010; www.royalairmaroc.com)

Ryanair (☎ 807 220 032; www.ryanair.com) Flies to Madrid from 15 European airports.

Scandinavian SAS (☎ 802 112 117; www.flysas.es)

Spanair (☎ 902 131 415; www.spanair.com) Flights from dozens of destinations throughout Spain and Europe, as well as the US, Africa and Bangkok.

Swiss International Airlines (☎ 901 116 712; www.swiss.com)

TAP Air Portugal (☎ 901 116 718; www.flytap.com)

Thai Airways (☎ 91 782 05 21; www.thaiairways.com) Madrid–Bangkok with connections in Asia.

Transavia (☎ 902 010 105; www.transavia.com) Low-cost flights from Amsterdam to Madrid.

Turkish Airlines (☎ 902 111 235; www.turkishairlines.com)

Vueling (☎ 902 333 933; www.vueling.com) Spanish low-cost company with flights between Madrid and Amsterdam, Brussels, Lisbon, Valetta, Milan, Naples, Paris and Venice.

Airport

Madrid's **Barajas airport** (☎ 902 404 704; www.aena.es) lies 12km northeast of the city and every year more than 52 million passengers pass through here (double the number for 1998).

The airport's architecturally stunning Terminal 4 (T4) deals mainly with flights of Iberia and its partners (eg British Airways, American Airlines and Aer Lingus), while other intercontinental or non-Schengen European flights leave from T1. Spanair and Air Europa operate from both T1 and T2, depending on the destination. Air Berlin, Alitalia, Austrian Airlines, SAS and TAP Air Portugal also operate from T2. At the time of research only the tiny Lagun Air was operating out of T3. Iberia's Puente Aereo (air shuttle) between Madrid and Barcelona, which operates like a bus service with no advance booking necessary, operates from T4, while Spanair's equivalent

INTERNET AIR FARES

Most airlines, especially budget ones, encourage you to book on their websites. Other useful general sites to search for competitive fares include the following:

- www.atrapalo.com (in Spanish)
- www.cheaptickets.com
- www.despegar.com (in Spanish)
- www.ebookers.com
- www.expedia.com
- www.lowestfare.com
- www.opodo.com
- www.orbitz.com
- www.planesimple.co.uk
- www.rumbo.es (in Spanish)
- www.sta.com
- www.travel.com.au
- www.travelocity.com