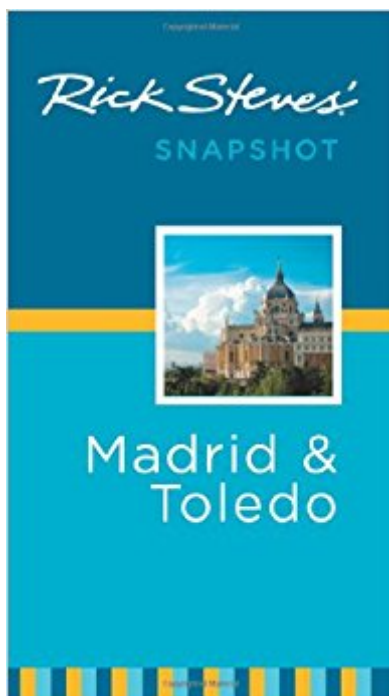


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Rick Steves' Snapshot Madrid And Toledo



Synopsis

You can count on Rick Steves to tell you what you really need to know when traveling in Madrid and Toledo. In this 138-page compact guide, Rick Steves covers the best of Madrid and Toledo, including tips on arrival, orientation, and transportation. In Madrid, visit the masterpieces of the Prado Museum, and explore the Royal Palace. Or visit Toledo's vast Cathedral or Alcázar. You'll get Rick's firsthand advice on the best sights, eating, sleeping, and nightlife, and the maps and self-guided tours will ensure you make the most of your experience. More than just reviews and directions, a Rick Steves Snapshot guide is a tour guide in your pocket. Rick Steves' Snapshot guides consist of excerpted chapters from Rick Steves' European country guidebooks. Snapshot guides are a great choice for travelers visiting a specific city or region, rather than multiple European destinations. These slim guides offer all of Rick's up-to-date advice on what sights are worth your time and money. They include good-value hotel and restaurant recommendations, with no introductory information (such as overall trip planning, when to go, and travel practicalities).

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Customer Reviews

Rick Steves has spent 100 days every year since 1973 exploring Europe. Rick produces a public television series (Rick Steves' Europe), a public radio show (Travel with Rick Steves), and a podcast (Rick Steves' Audio Europe); writes a bestselling series of guidebooks and a nationally syndicated newspaper column; organizes guided tours that take thousands of travelers to Europe

annually; and offers an information-packed website (ricksteves.com). With the help of his hardworking staff of 70 at Europe Through the Back Door¹⁵¹; in Edmonds, Washington, just north of Seattle¹⁵¹; Rick's mission is to make European travel fun, affordable, and culturally broadening for Americans.

Overall an OK guide for a first visit to Madrid. However, a little too touristic for my taste in some of its choices to highlight. The El Escorial + Valle de los Caídos recommendation is quite sad. If you really like history, you would expend more time in el Escorial and not use the cheesy Bus-Tour combination of two sites that have absolutely no relation to each other historically or otherwise. Take the train in downtown Madrid and in 1 hour you will be in the Escorial train station. Take the local bus and in 5 minutes you will be in the town of El Escorial...and then you can decide how much time you should spend in the Escorial. From the austerity of the private lodgings of Felipe II to the stunning library that deserves some time to just look at the books that they have and if you are able to read a bit in latin (or in spanish) they have several books open that you can try to read something. Some comments about certain historical places and museums, making some easy jokes and calling propaganda to some historical inscriptions are out of place in this guide and that is why I put to this guide a 3 star even though in some aspects may be closer to a 4 star. The recommendation to visit the Sta Cruz Museum in Toledo is great, it is a fantastic place to visit and it is still for free. The sarcastic comments about how it is run...not so great....this is a fantastically preserved place in a very historic city. If you have to decide between visiting Sta Cruz or El Alcazar in Toledo. Please visit the Sta Cruz Museum, so much better choice! About Segovia...this is such an important historical place with over 2000 years of history!!...and this guide really does not take this wonderful little city seriously. This was heavily settled by the Romans who built an aqueduct that it is a very impressive and well-preserved feature of the city today. It was an important site for the Arabs during mid-medieval times. Segovia was the summer residence for the kings of Castille for centuries, it is so full of history!...and the Alcazar of Segovia absolutely deserves a visit. The military museum housed in one side of the Alcazar is a very interesting place if you like history, it is not all about weapons, it is also about development of new farming techniques, development of chemistry...etc..... Sad sad how the city of Segovia is treated as a very optional fast side trip in this guide....The cathedral is wonderful, it was built in the 16th century, but there are also other earlier important churches in the city.

This was a good, light guidebook for Madrid and Toledo. It's a bit light on background, and I found

the recommendations for dining a bit thin; but otherwise is a very good guidebook for quick visits where you're just hitting the highlights. I used this guidebook on an iPad and an iPhone 4. Even in the small format of the iPhone 4, I found the guide very readable. Some criticisms I would have is that for some reason this version of the eBook doesn't have full maps. In another eGuidebook I purchased, the Seville Snapshot guide by Rick Steves, you would get a full map and then on subsequent pages, you would get sections of the map (in quarters). I suppose this was to allow you to view the full map, and then to be able to zoom in to quarter sections for more detail. However, in this version of the ebook, I only got the quarter sections, which was very inconvenient and made it very difficult to read the maps. Also, the book could use a better table of contents or index. It would make it much easier to flip to specific sites, museums, monuments, etc. The table of content headings are too broad. Lastly, for those who would use this guidebook on their phones, I discovered a disadvantage of this format when I was trying to follow Rick's self-guided walk through the Palacio Real. You're not allowed to use cell phones in the Palacio! They don't care that you're using it to read a guidebook - they won't let you use cell phones for any reason. I suppose they're trying to keep people from using their phone cameras, but I was very rudely told to put my cell phone away. I didn't have any troubles in any of the art museums or cathedrals I went to, but it can be an issue.

I just came back from 10 days in Spain, including Madrid and Barcelona. Considering the cost and effort of a vacation, it is worth doing your research and I bought the relevant books from Lonely Planet, Frommers and Rick Steves'. While each had points to offer, Rick Steves' guide is what I took with me every day and I used it most to plan my daily activities. I actually prefer its B&W format over the color format of the Lonely Planet books; while the color is visually nice, I found some of the white text on a colored background very hard to read. After all, these books are meant to be read and are not coffee-table art books. I also preferred the form-factor and slightly larger type face of the Steves' books over the Lonely Planet. I did use the Lonely Planet books for planning and to cross-check facts. Just as with movie or food reviews, you need to match your travel style to the reviewer and for me Steves' was best, with Lonely Planet a second. While every book comes with a map, I recommend buying a laminated and very detailed (but larger) Streetwise series map.

You can't go wrong with Rick. Read it prior to my visit to Spain which included Madrid & Toledo. I don't know. In a lot of ways I got just as much off the web and maybe more. Still, it's nice to have something to curl up with in the winter.

This covers Madrid and nearby Toledo quite well. The authors' opinions are obvious, but they hold up pretty well, based on our experience. There could be a bit more information on using the superb but slightly complex Madrid Metro system. There is excellent information on the Prado and on many of Madrid's other museums. The section on Toledo (which is worth a day's trip via a 40-minute train ride) is superb. The only complaint I have is that the book is not printed on glossy paper, and the maps are therefore less legible than they should be. You can walk across the heart of Madrid from the Royal Palace to the Prado easily, and if you take your time, this book will help you get a feeling for the structure and beauty of the city.

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