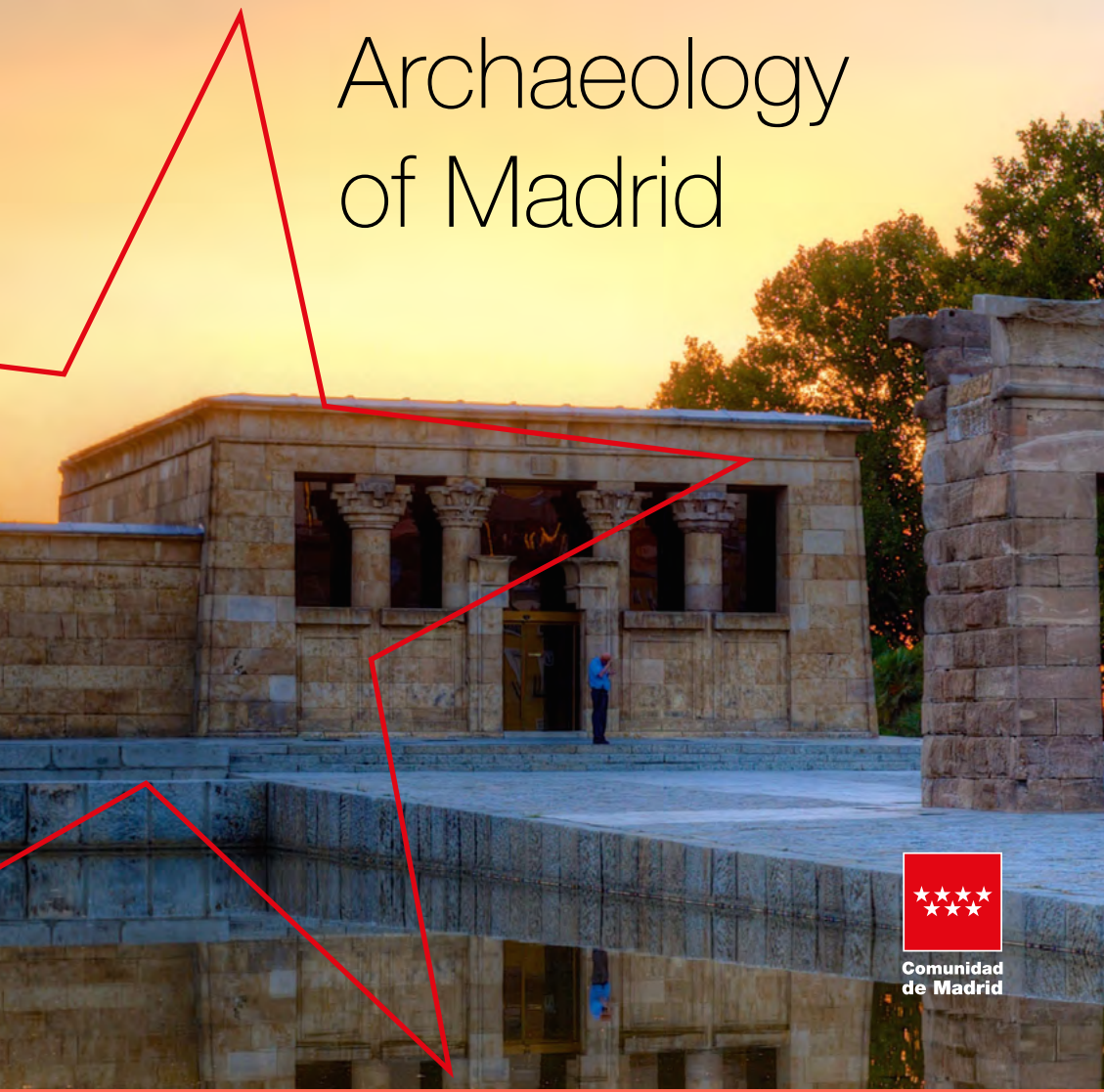




# Tourist Routes Around the Archaeology of Madrid

Temple of Debod,  
Madrid



## Archaeological Tourism in the Community of Madrid

Madrid is the world's greatest cultural destination, and its archaeological heritage is part of that. Within a relatively small territory, at our fingertips, we have unique remnants from the prehistoric world, the trace left by Iron Age towns, key sites from the Roman Empire, witnesses of the medieval past from several cultures and remains from the Civil War in the 20th century.

The Community of Madrid has several visitable sites from different historical eras located in places that are also very different. Some of them have been set up as museum exhibits and are easy to access, while others are the perfect excuse to go on a short excursion to get to them and discover them. A little adventure!

This leaflet aims to serve as an aid to discover this rich archaeological heritage while we enjoy everything that the region offers us: its gastronomy, its nature, and the charm of its towns are scattered over every place on our route into the past. Based on this idea, we are suggesting 6 tourist routes according to the geographic proximity of the sites, however it is possible to follow a chronological criteria.

In any case, here we have only included a sample of these heritage and archaeological riches. We encourage you to explore all the sites hidden within the Community of Madrid and discover your past!

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Legal deposit: M-18892-2023  
Year of publication: 2023

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of the Community of Madrid



Plan of visitable sites in the  
Community of Madrid



Left Visigothic site of  
Navalahija

Right: Historic road of La  
Fuenfría Valley

### Route 1. Amidst the mountains

We propose a first getaway exploring the mountain landscape of Madrid, the setting for numerous episodes in our history. We begin our route in Colmenar Viejo. Here, we find the **Visigothic settlements of Navalvillar and Navalhija** in the heart of Dehesa de Navalvillar, an area devoted to iron metallurgy.

Very close to the two previous settlements, sits the **Visigothic necropolis of Remedios**, located next to the hermitage of the same name. Without leaving the Visigothic world, and taking the route towards Cercedilla, it is worthwhile stopping at the settlement of El Rebollar, located between the municipalities of El Boalo, Cerceda and Mataelpino.

We will be stood in Cercedilla in barely half an hour and there, on foot, surrounded by the landscape of La Fuenfría Valley along hiking routes, we will go back in time to the Roman era along the **historic road of La Fuenfría Valley**: a stretch of road that connected Toledo to Segovia and which is surprisingly well preserved.

Very close to Cercedilla, in Collado Mediano, we can discover the remnants of an inn or *mansio* associated with the Fuenfría road: **El Beneficio**, and in Galapagar you will also find the remains of a road.

It is very possible that you will have worked up a hunger by this point, so you should not miss



### Archaeological sites in the Community of Madrid

#### Route 1

1. Navalvillar and Navalhija / Los Remedios
2. El Rebollar
3. Historic road
4. El Beneficio
5. La Cabilia

#### Route 2

6. Sieteiglesias
7. Frente del Agua
8. Valle de los Neanderthales

#### Route 3

9. Complutum

#### Route 4

10. Blockhaus 13
11. La Mezquita
12. Calatalifa
13. Piedra Escrita

#### Route 5

14. Carpetani Site of Miralrío

#### Route 6

15. Castle of Villarejo de Salvanés
16. Castle of Chinchón
17. Arqueopinto

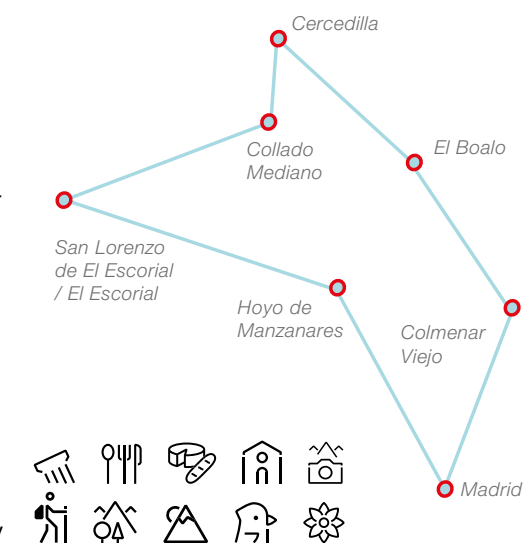


the chance to try the meat of the mountains of Madrid in any of the excellent restaurants in the area, with the designation of origin of the Sierra de Guadarrama.

A good way to round off this route is to stop at San Lorenzo de El Escorial / El Escorial, a World Heritage Site where the Monastery complex and the charm of its streets have kept the flavour of its history intact. From here, the road of A Coruña takes us back to Madrid. On the way, in the municipality of Hoyo de Manzanares, we can visit another Visigothic settlement: **La Cabilia**.

In order to make the experience more enjoyable, we recommend spending the night at any

of the excellent forms of accommodation dotted along the route.







Valley of the Neanderthals. Site of “La Descubierta” Pinilla del Valle, Photo by Javier Trueba

Route 2. The hidden valley

Once again, we are heading to the north of the Community, this time to Buitrago del Lozoya with its impressive walls, imbuing ourselves with the medieval spirit that will prepare us for our next adventure. On the way to Buitrago, just a few kilometres away, we find the **medieval necropolis of Sieteiglesias**, a burial complex dating to the 9th-11th centuries, which was used until the 15th century.

Nearby, we find important remnants of military architecture from the Spanish Civil War. **The Waterfront** (Walls of Buitrago) is a large number of defensive works constructed by the Republic to control the supply of water.

We are heading off to Rascafría, Town of Madrid, where we can visit the **Monastery of**

**Santa María de El Paular** in a baroque style and buy delicious chocolate that is made locally. Very close by, in Pinilla del Valle, an archaeological treasure awaits: in the Upper Valley of the Lozoya River, human remains of Neanderthals have been found along with what appears to be a shrine associated with the burial of a girl. The complex has been named the **Valley of the Neanderthals** and it offers guided visits to the settlements.

Back in the capital, we suggest stopping in **Talamanca de Jarama**, which has maintained a Roman bridge, in order to view evidence of the region’s Islamic past, such as its walled enclosure, named an Asset of Cultural Interest, which is complemented with several watch-towers around the area.



Medieval necropolis of Sieteiglesias



Patera of Titulcia (350 - 220 BC) Regional Archaeological Museum © MAR. Photo: Mario Torquemada

Route 3. Hail Complutum!

This time, our steps are heading eastward. The essential visit to discover Roman Madrid is the city of **Complutum** (Alcalá de Henares), founded in the 1st century BC. By visiting it, we can view all the buildings of a Roman city: the forum, the civil basilica, the baths, a food market and luxury private homes that take their names from the figures in their magnificent mosaics or wall paintings: the House of Leda, Bacchus, Leda, Cupidos, Peces, and the most spectacular of all: the House of Grif-fins. In the suburbs of the city we find the



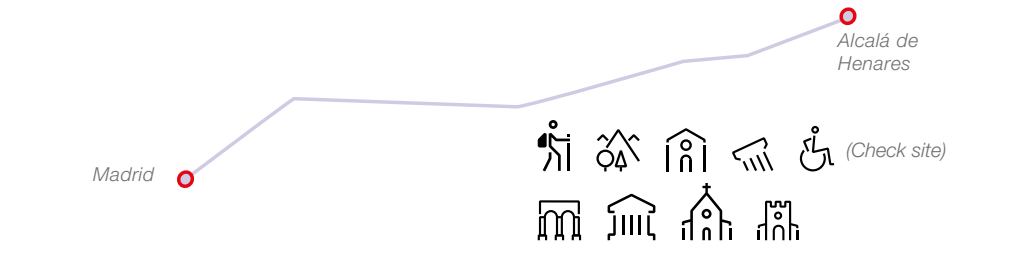
Detail of the mosaic in the House of Hippolytus

**House of Hippolytus**, with a spectacular mosaic that it is named after and the visitable settlement of El Encín.

We are moving forward in time: a walk through Los Cerros Natural Park in Alcalá on the banks of the Henares river, will take us to the Islamic fortress of **Alcalá la Vieja**. The hunger worked up by the long walk around this first-class natural resource is the perfect excuse to revel in the famous tapas that the city offers. Having restored our energy, we can delve into the al-

leyways and Renaissance monuments of this town, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

You cannot miss out on the **Regional Archaeological Museum of Madrid**, essential to discover the historical development of our region through its material remnants. A few metres away, we can visit the **Antiquarium and Archaeological Walk of the Archbishop’s Palace** in the walled enclosure of the city of Alcalá de Henares.



Blockhaus 13

Route 4. Wine and history

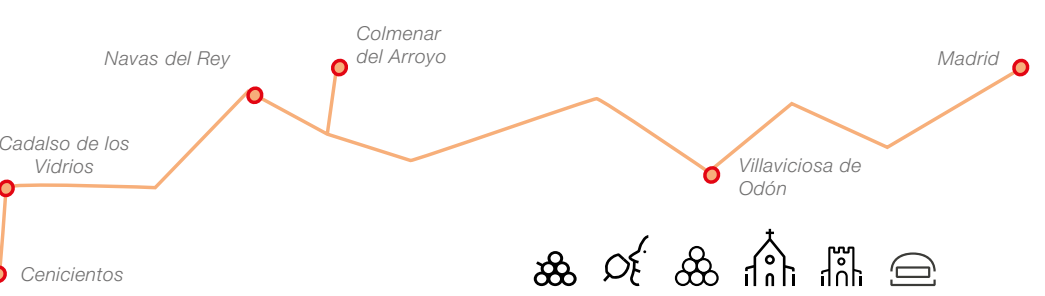
Some remnants of the region’s history also await us in the southwest of the Community. It is also an important winemaking area, therefore we can have a look at any of the wineries where wines are stored with the designation of origin of the Community of Madrid. We are heading to **Navas del Rey**, where its castle takes us back to the period of the Reconquest.

From Navas, we are a stone’s throw from Cadalso de los Vidrios. In this town we can visit the Mudejar church and the necropolis of **“La Mezquita”**, a complex of remnants of a Romanesque-Mudejar church, an adjoining cemetery, a destroyed tower next to the walls of the apse of the church and the remnants of a portico.

Back in the contemporary period, it is highly recommended to visit **Blockhaus 13** (Colmenar del Arroyo). An impressive bunker built at the end of the Civil War which imitates the constructions of World War II.

In Cenicientos, be surprised by the **Piedra Es-crita** (Written Stone). Dating to the 2nd century AD, it is a rock shrine sculpted in granite with a Roman inscription on one side, which was touched up and transformed in the Christian age.

On the way back, it is worthwhile stopping in Villaviciosa de Odón to see the Castle of **Catalifa**.



Route 5. Land of Castles

Located between the two Castiles, Madrid is home to several medieval fortresses as it was a boundary zone during the Middle Ages. We are heading to **Villarejo de Salvánés**, Town of Madrid, where we will be greeted by the impressive Watchtower of its castle, which currently houses the Museum of Spanish Tercios.

On the way, we can experience the Madrid Iron Age at the **Carpetani habitat of Miralrío** (Rivas –Vaciamadrid). In the 8th century BC, the Carpetani, an ethnic group of the Celtiberians, lived in the centre of the meseta (plateau), always close to a river and on small hills that were easy to defend. They were essentially devoted to livestock grazing and farming. The most interesting part of this settlement is the remains of a house, rebuilt to show us how they lived.

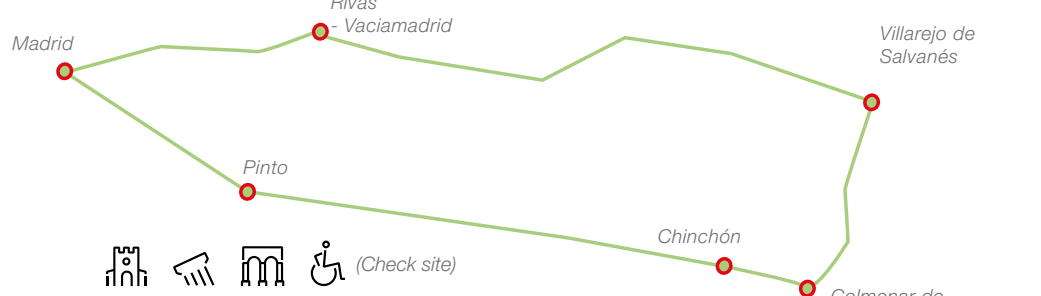
After Villarejo, our next stop is Colmenar de Oreja, Town of Madrid linked to the nearby castle of Oreja, where we can visit the Ulpiano Checa Museum. The castle is another of the incentives to visit **Chinchón**, where its Plaza



Castle of Villarejo de Salvánés

Mayor, gastronomy, its love affair with cinema and its famous aniseed liqueur more than justify a visit.

On your route, don’t forget to consider a visit to **Arqueopinto**, a recreational space for learning about the archaeology of Madrid for adults, families and children.



Arabic wall of Madrid

Route 6. From Mayrit to the sky

The city of Madrid (Mayrit) was founded in medieval times, and there are settlements of enormous interest in its urban centre. Among shopping, heading out at night, gastronomic getaways, museums and walks through the World Heritage Site of the **Landscape of Light**, it is necessary to leave some time to discover its archaeological treasures.

The Madrid underground is not only the preferred form of transport for visiting the city, it will also take you into the past: in Sol metro station in the centre we find the foundations of the former **Buen Suceso Church**. And right within the Ópera metro station we find the remains of the old square of **Los Caños del Peral**.

Madrid offers some surprising places. **Temple of Debod** is a real Egyptian temple which, at 2200 years old, is the oldest monument in the city.

**The National Archaeological Museum** is an essential visit. There, you can admire the Lady of Elche among other archaeological treasures. It is also worth visiting the **Museum of San Isidro**, where the patron saint of the city lived.



Information of interest

- Navalvillar and Navalhija  
28770 Colmenar Viejo, Madrid
- Necropolis of Remedios  
Carr. Guadalupe, 5, 28794  
Colmenar Viejo, Madrid
- Settlement of El Rebollar  
Calle Madrid, 12B, 28413  
El Boalo, Madrid
- Necropolis of Sieteiglesias  
C. de la Iglesia, 1, 28753  
Sieteiglesias, Madrid
- Interpretation Centre of the Waterfront  
C. de la Plazuela del Cura, 4, 28196  
Paredes de Buitrago, Madrid
- Valley of the Neanderthals  
C. del Embalse, 11, 28749  
Pinilla del Valle, Madrid.
- Complutum  
Cam. del Juncal, 28802,  
Alcalá de Henares, Madrid
- Mudejar church and necropolis of La Mezquita  
Av. de Madrid, 1B, 28640  
Cadalso de los Vidrios, Madrid
- Blockhaus 13  
28213 Colmenar del Arroyo, Madrid
- Carpetani Site of Miralrío  
C. de Marcial Lalanda, 18, 28521,  
Rivas-Vaciamadrid, Madrid
- Arqueopinto  
C. Pablo Picasso, s/n, 28320  
Pinto, Madrid
- Caños del Peral  
Ópera Metro Station, Pl. de Isabel II, 8,  
28013 Madrid
- Temple of Debod  
C. de Ferraz, 1, 28008, Madrid
- National Archaeological Museum  
Calle de Serrano, 13, 28001, Madrid
- Regional Archaeological Museum  
Pl. de las Bernardas, no number, 28801,  
Alcalá de Henares, Madrid
- Museum of San Isidro  
Plaza de San Andres, 1,  
28005, Madrid

