

Maribel's Guide to Madrid © -Updates

February '08

Madrid Holidays for 2008

Jan. 1, Tuesday - New Year
Jan. 7, Monday - Three Kings
March 20, Thursday - Holy Thursday
March 21, Friday - Good Friday
May 1, Thursday - Labor Day
May 2, Friday - Fiesta of the Community of Madrid
May 15, Thursday - San Isidro
July 25, Friday - St. Santiago Apostle
Aug. 15, Friday - Assumption of the Virgin
Sept. 9, Tuesday - Santa Maria de la Cabeza (transfer of La Almudena)
Oct. 13, Monday - Spain's National Fiesta
Nov. 1, Saturday - All Saints Day
Dec. 6, Saturday - Constitution Day
Dec. 8, Monday - Immaculate Conception
Dec. 25, Thursday – Christmas

Transportation from airport to city

The 08 estimated taxi fares from Terminal 4 (Iberia and One World Alliance flights) to downtown, including the obligatory €5.25 supplement, are as follows:

Plaza de Colón, €28.15
Puerta del Sol, €33,10
Plaza de España, €31.20
Estación de Atocha, €31 (for catching the AVE to Barcelona, Toledo, Córdoba, Sevilla or Málaga)
Estación de Chamartín €27 (for catching the AVE to Segovia)

From Terminals **1,2,3** (Continental, US Air, Delta, Spanair, Air Europa, Ryan Air) the estimated fares are the following:

Plaza de Colón, €21.10
Puerta del Sol, €23.05
Plaza de España, €23.50
Estación de Atocha €24
Estación de Chamartín, €20.10

Inauguration of the new high speed AVE train, Madrid to Barcelona

After years of frustrating delays, the Spanish National Railways, RENFE, has announced that long anticipated high speed AVE will be officially inaugurated on February 20 with service open to the general public on inauguration day. There will be both daily non-stop trains and trains with intermediary stops. Most of the 8 daily non-stop trips from Madrid will take 2 hours and 38 minutes. The ride with 3 intermediary stops at Zaragoza-Lleida-Tarragona will take 2 hrs. 50 min. The train will travel at a maximum speed of 300 kilometers per hour, with the average speed of between 230-240 km. per hour.

Tickets can be purchased on line at www.renfe.es beginning February 14.

Standard one-way fare will be €102 (with stops) and €120 (non stop). The round trip fare will cost €163.2 and €192, constituting a savings of 20%.

There will also be a limited number of web-only, deeply discounted fares (60% off), which must be purchased online a minimum of 15 days in advance. They will cost €40,8 (with stops) and €48 (non stop). These fares may only be purchased one way.

Another discounted (40% off) option will be the “Estrella” fares, which must be purchased no later than 7 days in advance, with prices of €61 (with stops) and €72 (non stop).

The aforementioned fares are in **tourist class**.

Renfe will also offer an open ticket, “Puente AVE”, for €168,50, to be used any time within a year of purchase (similar to Iberia's walk up Puente Aéreo fares). This ticket can be validated in any of the auto-check in machines at the Renfe stations.

The initial 34 daily trains, 17 in each direction, will have a seating capacity of 13,498.

Renfe guarantees that if your AVE train arrives between 15-30 minutes, late, you will be refunded half the ticket price. If your train arrives more than a half hour late, you will receive a full refund.