

Jewish National Fund

PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL MISSION

Optional Pre-Mission to Madrid, Spain

October 25 - 30, 2011

- Mission Chair: Kenneth Segel • Mission Professional: Glen Schwartz •



Madrid



Plaza Mayor



Hotel Ritz

tuesday october 25 • arrival / madrid

Welcome to Madrid! After meeting our guide for a brief introduction, we will begin with an **orientation tour** of Spain's most cosmopolitan city. During the tour, we will stop at **Plaza de Colón** to see the grand Christopher Columbus statue that was erected in 1885 to commemorate the discovery of the Americas.

We will pass by the majestic **Retiro Park**, Madrid's version of New York's Central Park. Known as an oasis of green within the city, the park was originally conceived as a royal garden, but it has served as Madrid's most popular park for the past 300 years. We will also see the **Royal Botanical Gardens** that is home to over 104 species of trees and 30,000 types of plants.

After a stop in **Plaza Mayor**, Madrid's historic central square that was built in the 17th century, we'll continue to **Plaza España** and see the Don Quijote and Sancho Panza memorials before ending our whirlwind tour at **Puerta del Sol**, which means "Gate to the Sun" and is part of the 15th century wall that surrounded the city.

We will proceed to the exclusive **Hotel Ritz**, Madrid's most luxurious hotel set in the heart of the Retiro District. After checking into our rooms, we will have some time to relax and freshen before this evening's **welcome dinner** at the hotel.

Overnight, Hotel Ritz, Madrid

wednesday october 26 • madrid



Plaza de Colon

Following breakfast, we will spend the morning exploring the **highlights of Madrid**. During the tour, we'll make stops at the fountain at **Plaza de Cibeles**, and see the impressive architecture surrounding **Plaza de Colón** and **Puerta de Alcalá**.



Palacio Real

We will continue to **Palacio Real**, which means Royal Palace. A beautiful exponent of the 18th century, it is one of the best-preserved palaces in Europe. Inspired by sketches made by Bernini for the construction of the Louvre in Paris, it is built in the form of square and looks out over a large courtyard with galleries and a parade ground. During a tour, we will see some of the famous rooms within the palace, such as the Principal Staircase, Hall of the Alabarderos, the Throne Room, Gasparini, Carlos III, the Porcelain Room, the Gala Dining Room, the Museum of Silver, the Principal Courtyard and the Royal Chapel.

Afterward, we will continue to the **Reina Sofia Museum of Modern Art**, one part of Madrid's "golden triangle" of art museums. During our tour, we'll see many famous pieces by Salvador Dalí, Juan Gris, Joan Mirá and Pablo Picasso, including what many consider Picasso's masterpiece, Guernica. Following the tour, we will head to the museum's roof terrace for a spectacular panoramic view of the city.



Reina Sofia Museum

As an alternative to the Reina Sofia Museum, we may choose to visit the **Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum** instead. Another part of Madrid's "golden triangle" of art museums, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum houses one of the world's largest private collections with emphasis on the Flemish School and the Impressionists.

Following lunch at a local restaurant or café on our own, we will proceed to **Barrio Lavapies**, the old Jewish Quarter of Madrid. We'll take a walk down the **Calle de la Fé**, or the Street of Faith, which was called the Street of the Synagogues before the expulsion of the Jews in 1492. We will continue to **Calle Cabeza** and **Calle Lavapies** to visit the former **Carcel de la Inquisición**, which is a lumber warehouse once used as the Inquisition jail.



Barrio Lavapies

Later this afternoon, we'll meet with a local **Jewish leader** to learn about modern Jewish life in Spain. This evening, we will enjoy **dinner** at a local restaurant.

Overnight, Hotel Ritz, Madrid



Toledo

thursday october 27 • toledo

Today we will take a half-day tour to **Toledo**, a fascinating imperial city surrounded by the Tagus River. Known as the city of three cultures, Toledo once flourished as a unique center where Jews, Muslims and Christians lived in harmony. Accordingly, this mix of cultures is reflected in the city's architecture and the city is a national monument to Spain's art, history and spirituality.

During our visit, we will visit Toledo's two synagogues. The first, **El sinagogo del Transito**, is considered one of the most important examples of Spanish-Jewish art and architecture in the world. Built in the 14th century, it is decorated with Mudejar elements and beautiful geometric motifs with Arabic and Hebrew inscriptions. We will also see the **Church of the Santa Maria La Blanca**, which was formerly a Mudejar synagogue built in the 13th century.



Inside El Synagogo del Transito

We will then take a guided tour of the nearby **Museo Sefardi**, or Sephardic Museum, that tells the history of the Sephardic Jews in Spain.

We'll continue on a walk through the **Jewish Quarter**. We'll visit the **Casa – Museo de El Greco**, or the El Greco House and Museum. Opened in 1911, the museum is located in the Jewish Quarter and contains numerous works by El Greco as well as works by other 17th-century Spanish painters, furniture from the same era and ceramics from Talavera de la Reina.



Tombstone from Museo Sefardi

We will then enjoy **lunch** at a local restaurant in the center of town before we begin to make our way back to Madrid. Upon arrival into Madrid, we will have the rest of the afternoon and evening at leisure, providing us with an opportunity to enjoy Madrid's culture and nightlife at our own pace.

Overnight, Hotel Ritz, Madrid



Roman Aqueduct in Segovia

friday october 28 • segovia

Following breakfast this morning, we will depart for a tour of the old Castilian town of **Segovia**, which is now a World Heritage Site. Upon our arrival, we will see the still functioning, spectacular **Roman Aqueduct**, built in 211 A.D. At 3,000 feet long, it was made from 20,400 stone blocks but not united by mortar or concrete!

We will proceed to the restored **Jewish Quarter** that was home to Jewish people throughout medieval times. Ironically, it was also here in Segovia's hilltop Alcazar (palace-fortress) that King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella signed the 1492 order to expel the Jews from Spain. As we walk through the Jewish Quarter, we will visit a former synagogue that is now the Church of Corpus Christi and then continue to the remains of an old Jewish Cemetery.



Jewish Quarter

After lunch, we will visit the **Alcazar**, Spain's most famous castle that was built in the Middle Ages, before returning to Madrid this afternoon. We will return to our hotel to prepare for Shabbat. This evening, we will enjoy a special **Shabbat dinner** at a local synagogue or venue (TBD).

Overnight, Hotel Ritz, Madrid



Alcazar

saturday october 29 • madrid

Today will be at leisure in honor of Shabbat. Optional Shabbat services will be offered at a local synagogue.

This afternoon, there will be an optional guided tour of the **Museo del Prado**, the third part of Madrid's "golden triangle" of art museums. With over 7,000 paintings, the Museo del Prado is considered one of the most important art repositories in the world.



Museo del Prado

This evening, we will attend a traditional **flamenco show** followed by **dinner** at a local tapas restaurant in the city.

Overnight, Hotel Ritz, Madrid



Flamenco Dancing

sunday october 30 • madrid / israel

After checking out of the hotel this morning, we will transfer to the airport for our flight to Israel.