

RATÓN PÉREZ'S MADRID



MADRID

This Guide to Madrid belongs to



Hi!

I'm Ratón Pérez, the little mouse that collects your teeth and leaves a small present under your pillow. I'm here to show you Madrid.

Why me? Well, you see, it's my city!

You didn't know that? Really?

It's true! I live in Madrid, on a street called Calle del Arenal. It's very, very close to Puerta del Sol, so I'm a "Madrileño" through and through.

I'm as typical as Madrid's "chulapos".

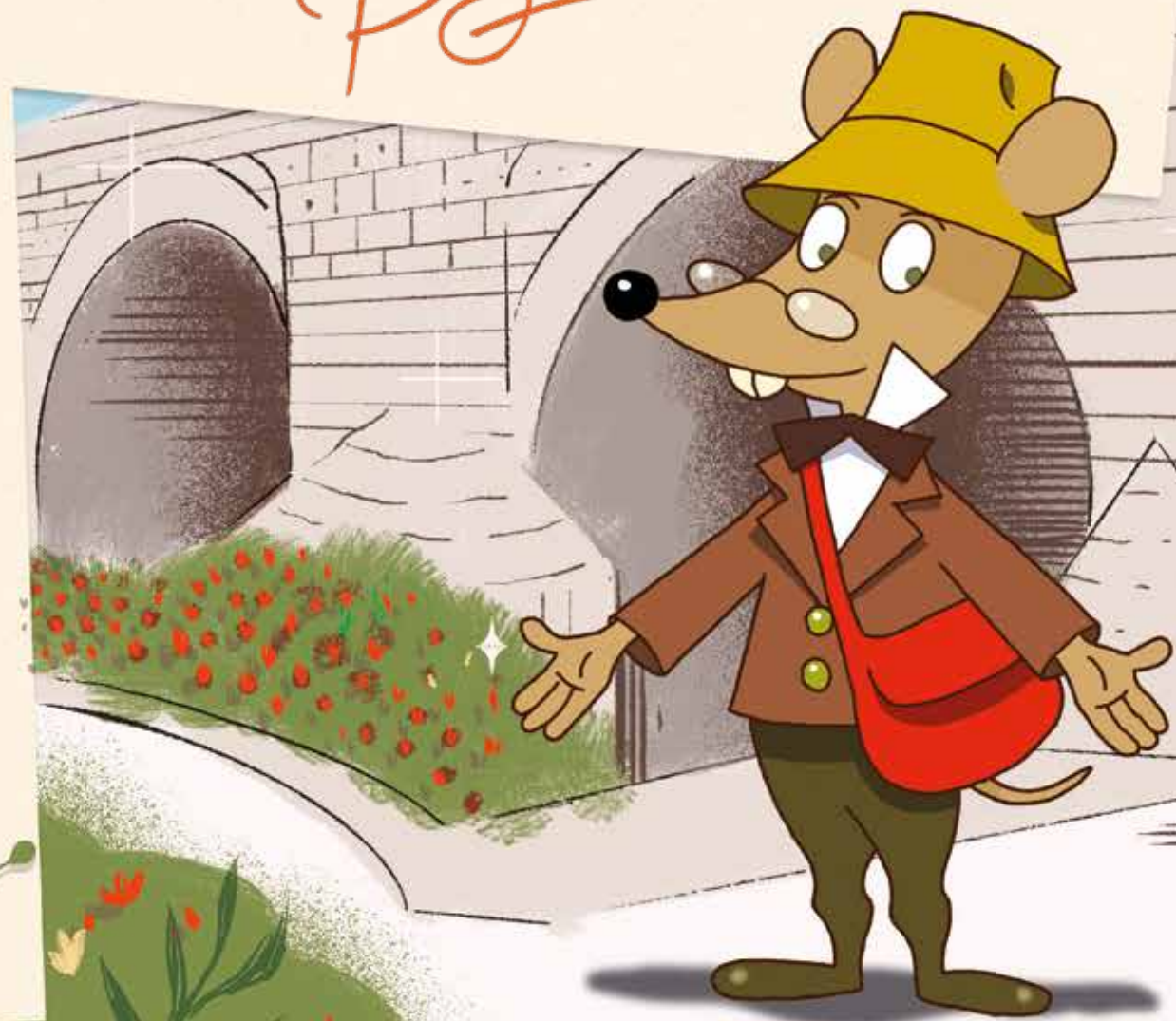
You don't know what a "chulapo" is?

Hmph! I have so much to teach you about my city!

Come with me, we're going to take a little tour of Madrid. Here we're always very friendly and welcoming to newcomers.

Enjoy the tour!

Ratón Pérez





A walk through Madrid's royal history

I was born here over 100 years ago. The reason I'm so full of energy is that I walk everywhere. Do you walk a lot too?

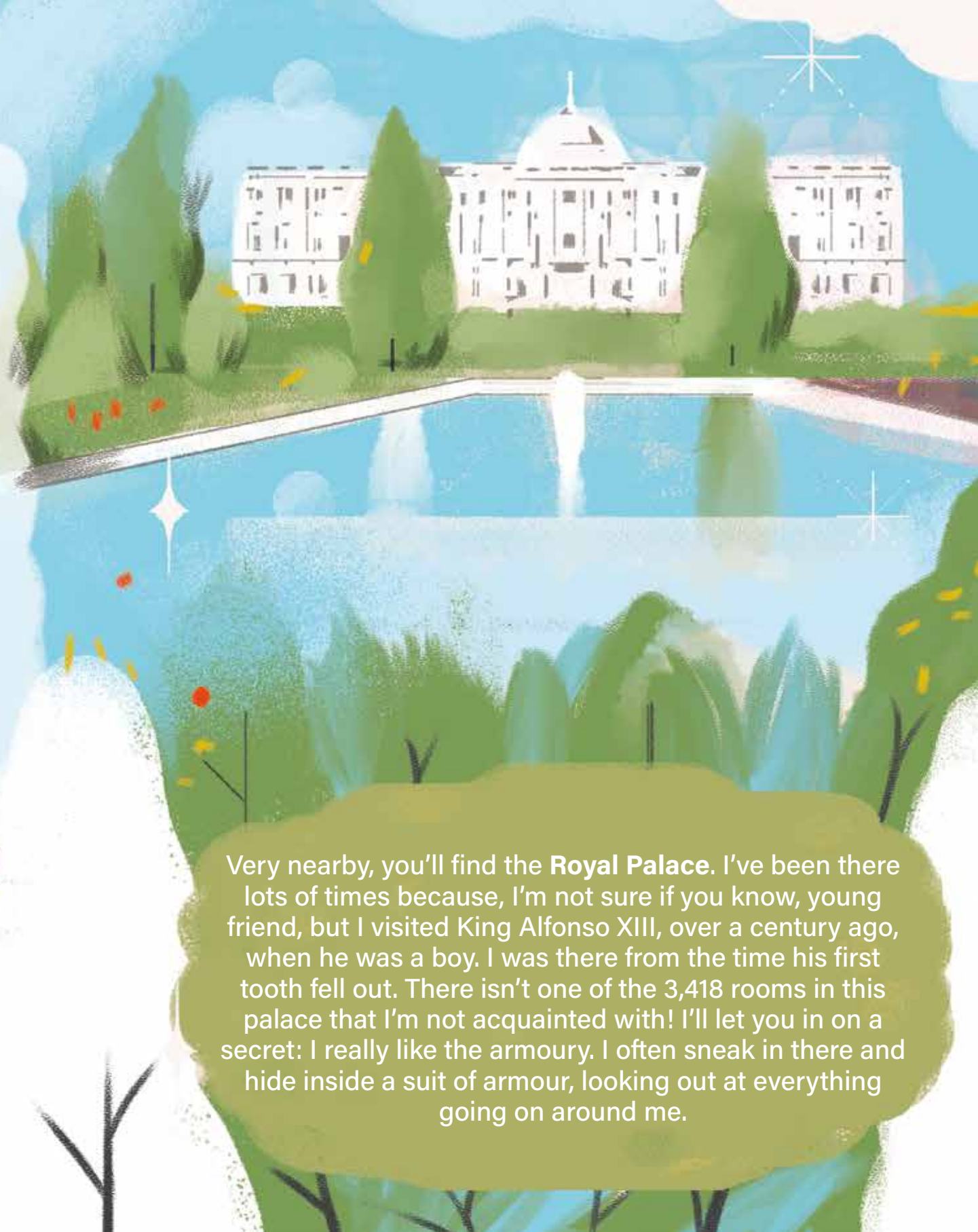
Well done! It's the best way to stay in shape and make sure you don't miss anything that's happening nearby, especially if you're new here. By walking, you'll be able to get a good look at everything I want to show you.


I'll start with **Plaza Mayor**.

It's the most important public square in the city, and it's 400 years old (don't start counting, we might be here all day!). I'll just say that all sorts of events have been held here, and when there was no TV or video games or books, people would come here to have fun and celebrate. It was also a big market. Animal-drawn carts brought food in through those huge arches. These days, there's a stamp and coin market held here every Sunday. The square also hosts concerts, and, of course, at Christmas there's a giant tree and a Christmas market. It's not that far off from how it was done in the old days.



Very nearby, you'll find the **Royal Palace**. I've been there lots of times because, I'm not sure if you know, young friend, but I visited King Alfonso XIII, over a century ago, when he was a boy. I was there from the time his first tooth fell out. There isn't one of the 3,418 rooms in this palace that I'm not acquainted with! I'll let you in on a secret: I really like the armoury. I often sneak in there and hide inside a suit of armour, looking out at everything going on around me.





In the centre of the square, you'll find one of Madrid's most famous statues: the Monument to Cervantes. What? You don't know who Cervantes was? He wrote Don Quixote. Does he sound a bit more familiar now? It's the most famous book ever written in Spanish.

Apart from statues of famous people, the square has great playgrounds, and you can walk or ride your bike to the Royal Palace or the Temple of Debod along a really nice route.

Plaza de España also links up to Gran Vía, an avenue over one hundred years old that's super famous. Its theatres are just one reason why.

You can watch the most amazing musicals of the season there with your family.

Just a few minutes from here is **Plaza de España**. It's really cool! It's not just any old square, is it?

Speaking of amazing playgrounds, you've got to visit Madrid Río Park! It's very close to here and you'll be surprised by how big it is. It's 10 kilometres long! The park's name has the word *río*, which means river, in it because it's located along the River Manzanares. As you'd imagine in such a big place, it has absolutely everything: children's play areas (as many as 17!) with slides, ziplines and castles for climbing, bike lanes, gardens where you can have picnics, sports courts and pitches, and more. There's also a place with water jets that turn on in the summer so people can cool off, and it's loads of fun.



It's really nice to go for a walk along the river and then, when you get tired, you can have a drink with your family at one of the outdoor cafés.

Here's a tip: stop for a few minutes to watch the birds that live along the river. There are lots of different species, like the kingfisher and the grey heron.

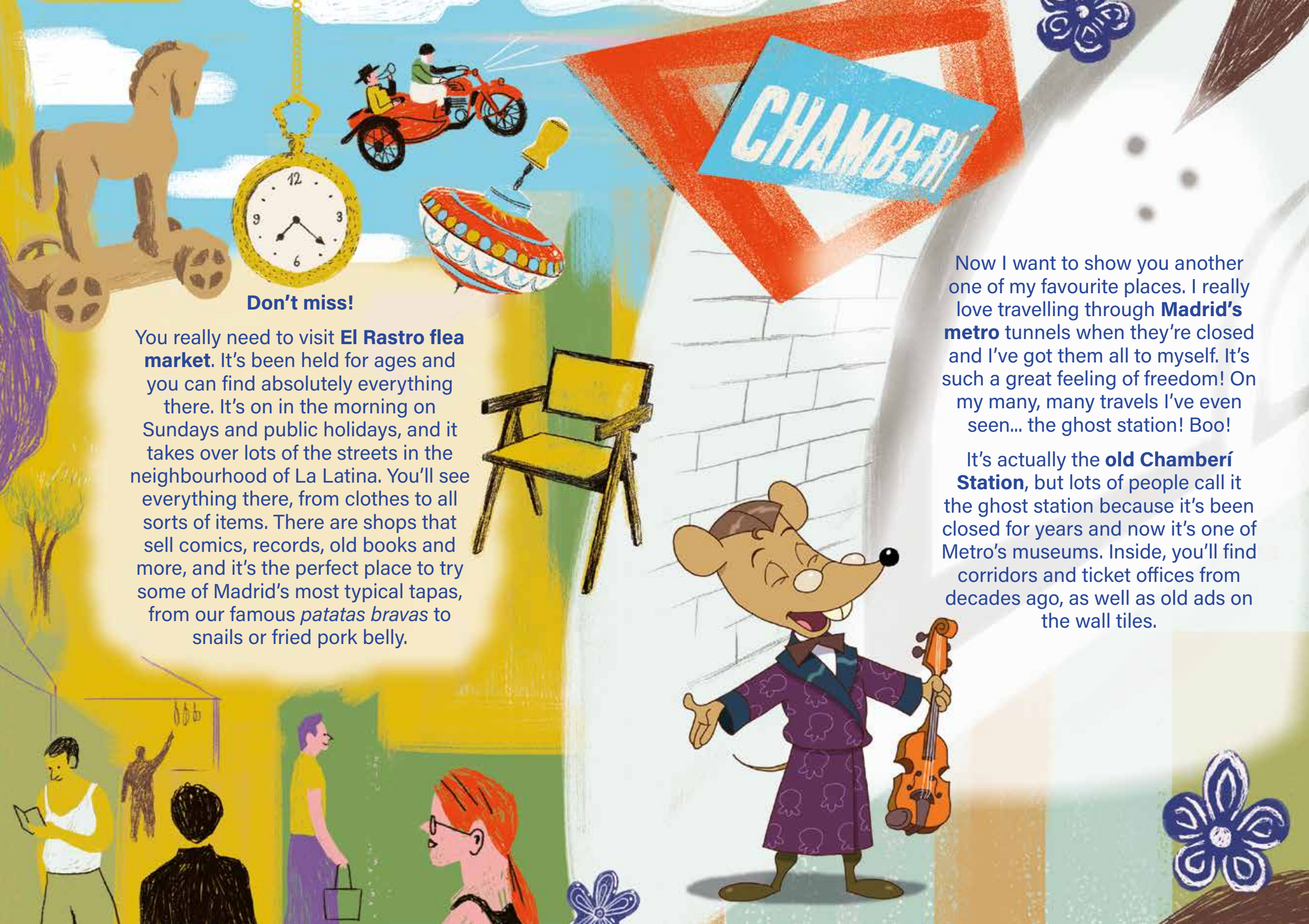
Explore the big park!

If, by any chance, you've still got some energy left, hop over from Madrid Río to **Casa de Campo Park!** Did you know there's only one city in the world with more trees than Madrid? Many of them are in Casa de Campo Park, a forest that was once only for Spain's monarchs. People come here for picnics and to do sport, and it's also where Madrid's amusement park, **Parque de Atracciones**, is located. It's a super fun place with all sorts of entertaining shows!



Very close by is the **Zoo Aquarium**, where you can see all kinds of animals: elephants, zebras, lions, hippos, dolphins... Oh! You'll also be able to see the zoo's two most famous residents, the twin pandas. They're so funny! And don't miss another really fun experience: crossing the park on the **Teleférico**, or cable car. You get on in the city, and you end up in the middle of a forest!

Wow! That was a great trip! Now that you know so much about Madrid, I'm going to show you some curious places.



Don't miss!

You really need to visit **El Rastro flea market**. It's been held for ages and you can find absolutely everything there. It's on in the morning on Sundays and public holidays, and it takes over lots of the streets in the neighbourhood of La Latina. You'll see everything there, from clothes to all sorts of items. There are shops that sell comics, records, old books and more, and it's the perfect place to try some of Madrid's most typical tapas, from our famous *patatas bravas* to snails or fried pork belly.

Now I want to show you another one of my favourite places. I really love travelling through **Madrid's metro tunnels** when they're closed and I've got them all to myself. It's such a great feeling of freedom! On my many, many travels I've even seen... the ghost station! Boo!

It's actually the **old Chamberí Station**, but lots of people call it the ghost station because it's been closed for years and now it's one of Metro's museums. Inside, you'll find corridors and ticket offices from decades ago, as well as old ads on the wall tiles.



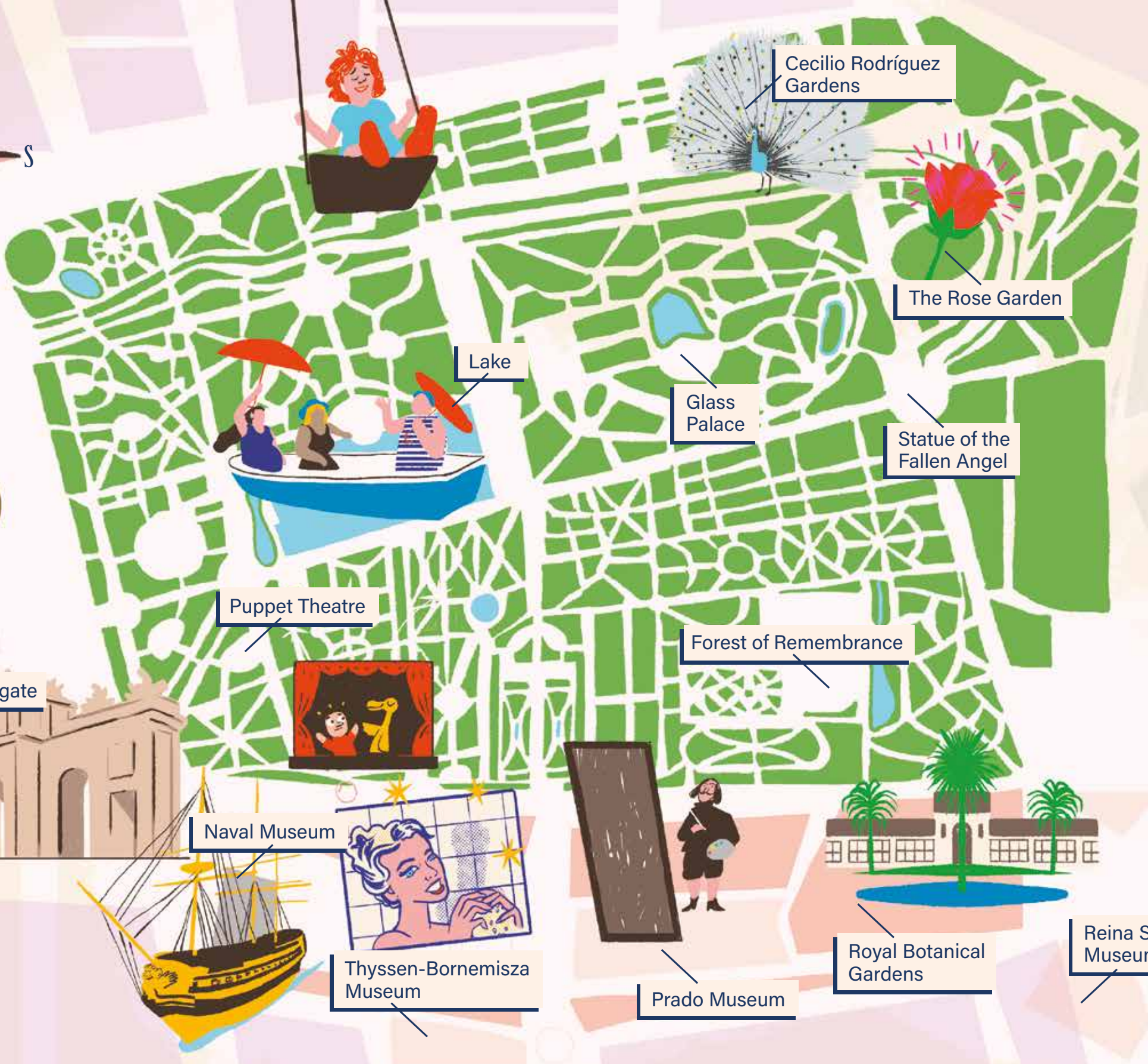
The Landscape of Light

Now, let me show you **El Retiro**. It's Madrid's most famous park and it has loads of fun, interesting places to check out. It has all sorts of playgrounds and a lake with rowing boats that you can take out with your family. I'm sure you'll see lots of carps, but I like the swans better. They're so elegant, with their nice, long necks. You can see them on the pond in front of the Glass Palace. There are also peacocks with colourful tails, which you'll find around the Cecilio Rodríguez Gardens area.

El Retiro Park is part of the Landscape of Light, an area of the city that has lots of history. That's why UNESCO* declared it a World Heritage Site, a title given to places in the world we all need to take care of because they're invaluable to us. The area has monuments like Puerta de Alcalá, one of five royal gates through which people entered the city in the old days. Today, it's one of Madrid's iconic sights. There are also important buildings like the Royal Observatory, and trees over one hundred years old. You know what? In summer, when everyone's still asleep, I walk down Paseo del Prado and splash around in its fountains. There's Cibeles Fountain, Apollo Fountain, Neptuno Fountain and Las Fuentecillas. Afterwards, I scurry over to the nearby Royal Botanical Gardens, where I clean myself down and dry off in the sun while I enjoy the smell of the flowers. It's wonderful in the spring, although it's amazing in the autumn too. The colours of the leaves at that time of year are magical.

* United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization

EL RETIRO PARÍ AND PASEO DEL PRADO



Cecilio Rodríguez Gardens

The Rose Garden

Glass Palace

Statue of the Fallen Angel

Lake

Puppet Theatre

Forest of Remembrance

Puerta de Alcalá gate

Naval Museum

Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum

Prado Museum

Royal Botanical Gardens


Reina Sofía Museum

Really cool museums!

I'm sure you already know that Madrid has loads of museums. You've probably heard of the **Prado**, the **Reina Sofía** and the **Thyssen-Bornemisza**. This city is a great place for art lovers.

I want to talk to you about other museums though. To start with, there's the National Museum of Natural Science, where you can see a life-sized replica of a **diplodocus skeleton**, or a **giant squid**! I also think you'll like the Naval Museum. It's got some really cool **miniature boats**.

If you want to be an archaeologist when you grow up, you should definitely visit the National Archaeological Museum. You'll learn about all the cultures that have lived in our country since **prehistoric times**.




And I'm sure you'll love the **Geomineral Museum**, which is in a beautiful building. Inside, you can admire **thousands of minerals and fossils, and hundreds of rocks and meteorites**. I could spend hours and hours there!

If you're a big football fan, don't miss the tour of Santiago Bernabéu, Real Madrid's home stadium, where the team's fantastic **14 European Cup and Champions League trophies** are displayed.

And of course, you have to visit the **Museum of Illusions**. It's unlike anything you've seen before. Nothing there is what it seems and it's full of magic: objects that come out of paintings, portraits that seem to follow you with their eyes, rooms where everything is backwards... or maybe it's you who's backwards?

Oh! And **the Robot Museum**! Here, you'll feel like you're in a science fiction film as the guides tell you about the history of robotics, and you'll see all kinds of robots, from dogs to androids. It's fantastic!





Last but not least, there's something else I want you to see. It's not far from Oeste Park. I hope you're not afraid of heights... If you've got nerves of steel, **Faro de Moncloa**, a tower that's 110 metres high, will blow your mind. It looks futuristic on the outside, and it has an amazing viewpoint at the top. It's this observation deck that offers views of almost the entire city, from its most important buildings to the Guadarrama Mountains. Don't worry if you don't know what any of them are. You can find out about them and their history on information panels that give a detailed explanation. It's like a museum of the city that's up in the air.

Before, I mentioned the **Temple of Debod**, but I kept a little surprise to myself. You won't believe this, but it's an Egyptian temple. Yes, it's really, truly from Egypt. It's 2,200 years old, and Egypt gave it to us as a present a long time ago so that we could all admire it. You can go inside and see the inner chambers. If you want to pretend that you're an ancient Egyptian, this is the place.



Things that are really typical of Madrid

We've got a sweet tooth in Madrid. We really love *bartolillos*, custard-filled turnovers that have been around for ages, and *torrijas*, Spain's answer to French toast. We also love *napolitanas*, which are sweet pastries with different fillings, hot chocolate and *churros*, which are like long, thin doughnuts, chocolate "sardines" sold during Carnival, *coronas de la Almudena*, which are ring-shaped cakes filled with whipped cream, and sweets. We've even got some that are shaped like violets, and they're delicious.

We've also got wafers...yum yum! We mostly eat them during the city's different festivities. Before, I mentioned **chulapos and chulapas**. They're people who wear traditional Madrid dress during our celebrations, which are also called *verbenas*. They sound a bit cocky when they talk, but they're really nice and they like dancing the **chotis**, one of our traditional dances. There are food stalls, music, dancing and fairs at the *verbenas*. They're held in the spring and summer in places like Las Vistillas Gardens. During the celebrations, you'll see wafer-sellers with our famous wafers, Manila shawls hanging from people's balconies, bunting in the streets and loads of carnations everywhere. You can't miss them if you visit Madrid in mid-May, during the San Isidro celebrations, or in August, during the San Cayetano, San Lorenzo and La Paloma festivities.


Oh, and don't forget to dress up for the occasion!




10 facts

(you might not know)

about Madrid




1. There are people of **181 different nationalities** living in Madrid

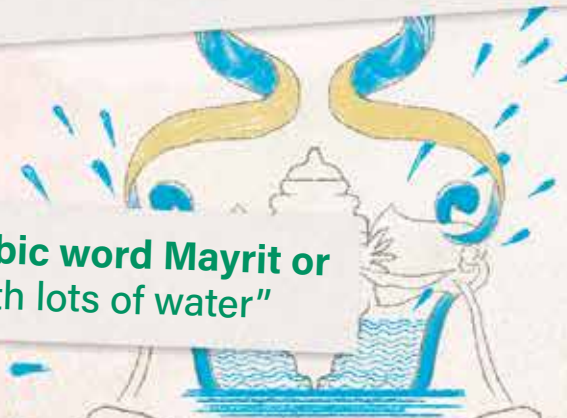


2. The city has **95 museums**

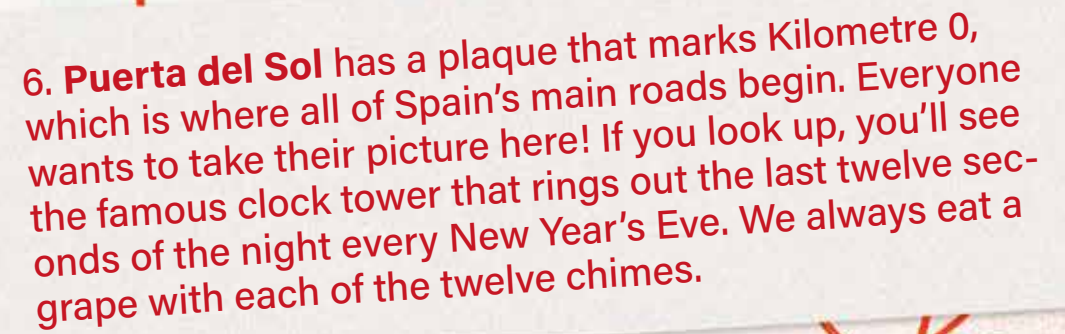
3. It has around **851,000 trees**



4. Madrid's **metro system** has almost **300 kilometres** of tracks. That's like going from Madrid to Cáceres or Teruel!




5. "Madrid" comes from the **Arabic word Mayrit or Magerit**, which means "place with lots of water"



6. **Puerta del Sol** has a plaque that marks **Kilometre 0**, which is where all of Spain's main roads begin. Everyone wants to take their picture here! If you look up, you'll see the famous clock tower that rings out the last twelve seconds of the night every New Year's Eve. We always eat a grape with each of the twelve chimes.



7. **The Bear and the Strawberry Tree** is a symbol of the city, and it's in Puerta del Sol



8. **Cibeles Fountain** has a secret: beneath it, **35 metres underground**, is the Bank of Spain's vault

9. Next to Buenavista Palace, on the kerb at the entrance to **Banco de España metro station**, I have **my own little entrance**. It's really small and it reads: "Sr. Pérez". That means "Mr Pérez".



10. Madrid is home to **Casa Botín**, the world's oldest restaurant according to the Guinness World Records. It was established in 1725!

I think you're cool! Do you want to see where I live? Now that I've told you all about lots of fun places in Madrid, it's time to visit the **Ratón Pérez House Museum!** I live very close to Puerta del Sol, at No. 8 Calle del Arenal. You'll see a plaque at the entrance that mentions me, right next to my portrait (I'm very famous, you see). Inside you'll find my bed, my living room, and some interesting items that I've gathered over the years. I think you'll like it. Next time you're in Madrid, don't forget to pay me a visit!

Game of Clues

Let's see what you know about Madrid. If you answer well, there will be a surprise waiting for you. I'm going to give you some clues. Each one is about a typical thing or place in Madrid. Write down your answers, they're all one word. In order, use the first letter from each answer to form a new word. This new word is a password. Say it at the desk at the Plaza Mayor Tourist Information Centre, and the agents will give you your "Expert on Madrid" diploma. **Let's play!**



Here are the clues:

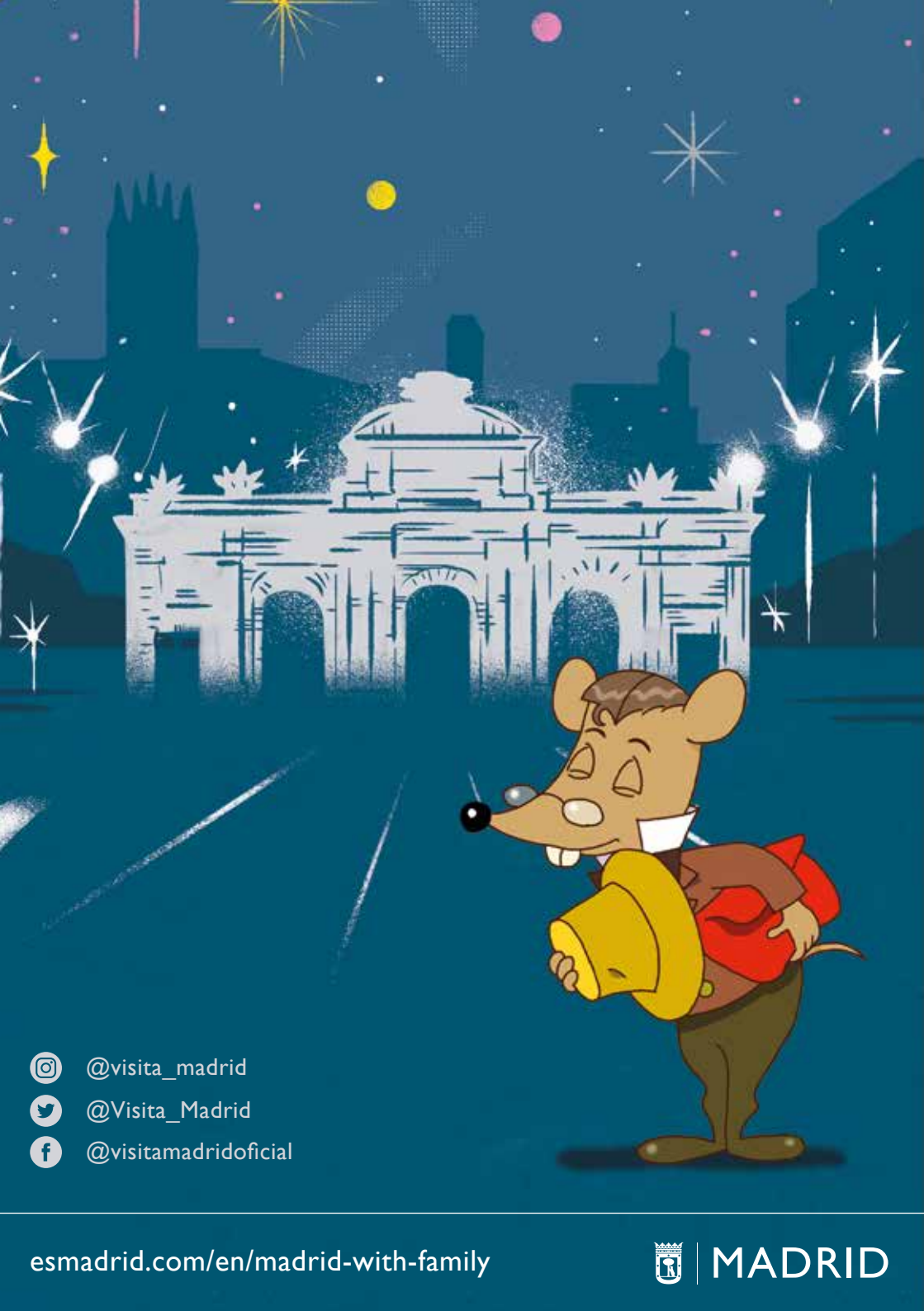
1. Verbena held on 15 August in Madrid:
.....
2. Many travellers arrive in our city at this famous train station (inside there's a really cool garden):
.....
3. Name of the famous Paseo, or boulevard, where the National Library is:
.....
4. A royal building that has over 3,000 rooms (the first person to live in the one in Madrid was King Charles III):
.....
5. Organisation that declared the Landscape of Light a World Heritage Site:
.....
6. Surname of the famous Italian architect that the gardens beside the Royal Palace are named after:
.....
7. Many women from Madrid have this name, because it's the name of the city's female patron saint. It's also the name of our cathedral:
.....




Word: _____

**Madrid is
so cool!**







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