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FREE GUIDE · MADRID

Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum

Ghirlandaio, Dürer, El Greco, Caravaggio, Van Gogh, Degas, Hopper — the 7 must-see works of the museum that completes Madrid's Art Walk, explained one by one



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Your visit at a glance

The Thyssen is the piece that completes Madrid's Art Triangle. Where the Prado reigns over old Spanish painting and the Reina Sofía over contemporary art, the Thyssen tells the whole story of Western painting, from the Italian primitives to Pop, with a private collection that two generations of the Thyssen-Bornemisza barons put together piece by piece and that Spain bought in 1993. This tour brings together the museum's seven must-see works —from Ghirlandaio to Hopper, by way of Caravaggio and Van Gogh—, with the context to understand why they matter and 1, 1.5 and 2-hour routes according to the time you have. The trick to getting the most out of it: go straight up to the 2nd floor and work your way down through time, like turning the pages of a manual of art history.

At a glance

PRICE

€14 general · €10 reduced

HOURS

Tue-Sun 10am-7pm · Sat until 9pm (temporary exhibitions free 9-11pm)

WORKS HERE

The 7 must-sees

FREE ENTRY

Mon 12-4pm (permanent)

TIME

1-2 h (about 1.5 h for all 7)

METRO

Banco de España (L2)



Part of Tickets Visit

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With this free guide you already do a great visit: the essentials, with a route. If you want to make the most of it, at the end I'll show you the complete version.

Before you go in: book your skip-the-line ticket

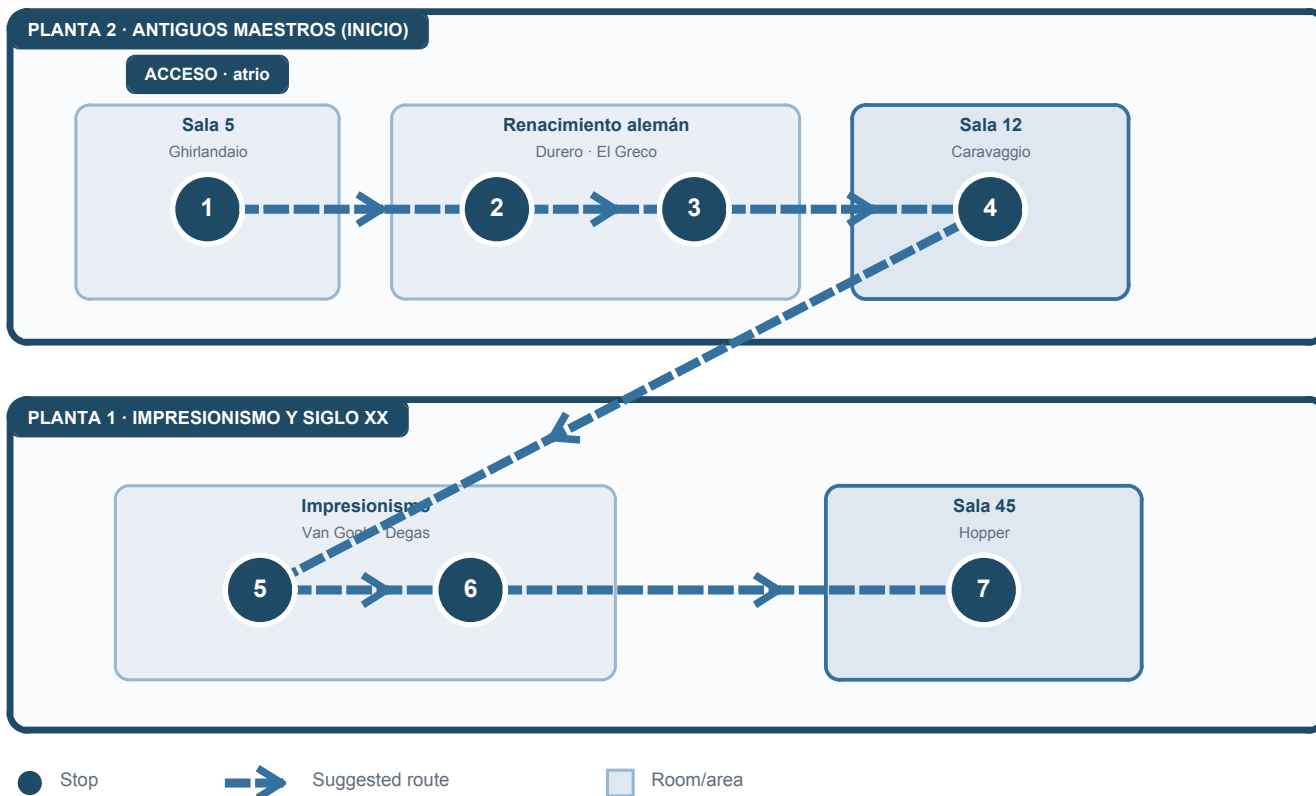
On Civitatis, with free cancellation. Skip the ticket-office queue.

» **Buy your ticket**

The map and the route

Take the lift up to the 2nd floor and start there: it's the floor of the old masters (13th-17th centuries), from Gothic gold to Caravaggio (stops 1-4). Then go down to the 1st floor, the museum's modern heart, from Impressionism to the avant-gardes (stops 5-7), and finish, if you still have the energy, on the ground floor, home to the Carmen Thyssen Collection and 20th-century art. That way you cover nearly 700 years of painting in chronological order, without doubling back. Bear in mind that the collection rotates, lends and rehangs works: if any of them isn't there on the day of your visit, you'll find others from the same room and period very close by.

MUSEO THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA · DOS PLANTAS (ESQUEMA, NO A ESCALA)



La colección se recorre en orden cronológico bajando de la planta 2 (antiguos maestros) a la planta 1 (impresionismo y siglo XX). Distribución orientativa, no a escala.

Visiting order: FLOOR 2: 1 Ghirlandaio › 2 Dürer › 3 El Greco › 4 Caravaggio — DOWN TO FLOOR 1 — 5 Van Gogh › 6 Degas › 7 Hopper

Schematic layout by area; the number shows the visiting order. Not to scale: follow the museum's own floor plans and signs on the day.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

1

Portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni — Ghirlandaio

Floor 2, room 5 · 10 min

Profile portrait of a young Florentine woman, painted around 1489-90 after her death in childbirth. A high point of Renaissance portraiture and the star work of the Thyssen.



Domenico Ghirlandaio, 'Portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni', c. 1489-90. Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum.

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**DON'T MISS THIS**

The cartellino with the Latin inscription, the brooch with the initial and the coral beads in the background, and the almost enamel-like perfection of the profile.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: the full story of Giovanna and the translation of the Latin inscription in the background — a line that turns the picture almost into a confession.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

4

Saint Catherine of Alexandria — Caravaggio

Floor 2, room 12 · 9 min

Canvas from c. 1598-99, a perfect example of Caravaggio's tenebrism. The saint leans on the wheel of her martyrdom, lit by a cutting light.



Caravaggio, 'Saint Catherine of Alexandria', c. 1598-99.

Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum.
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**WHERE TO LOOK**

The dramatic light that slices through the shadow, the gleaming edge of the sword and the texture of the fabrics; the saint's direct, utterly un-idealised gaze.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: Caravaggio's famous tenebrism explained in front of this very canvas — and the surprising identity of the woman who posed as the saint.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

5

Les Vessenots in Auvers — Van Gogh

Floor 1 (Impressionism) · 8 min

Landscape from June 1890, one of Van Gogh's last, painted in Auvers-sur-Oise. Wheatfields and thatched-roof houses in vibrant greens and yellows. (It may rotate: if it's not there, more Impressionism is nearby.)



*Vincent van Gogh, 'Les Vessenots in Auvers', 1890.
Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum.*

Photo: Richard Mortel from Riyadh · CC BY 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons

**LOOK AT IT LIKE THIS**

The nervous, visible brushwork stirring grass and trees, and the very high horizon that turns the field into a tapestry of greens and yellows.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: why these Auvers wheatfields are almost the diary of Van Gogh's last days — and the feverish pace at which he worked when he painted them.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

7

Hotel Room — Edward Hopper

Floor 1, room 45 · 9 min

Oil from 1931 and an icon of the museum. A woman alone reads on the edge of a hotel bed, under a hard light. Urban loneliness turned into painting. (Under copyright: we illustrate it with a context image.)



Context image: the museum's home. Hopper's work is still under copyright.
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**THE SILENCE**

The geometry of lights and shadows, the paper the woman is reading (a travel timetable) and the absolute silence of the scene. Notice the Degas-like framing.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: how Hopper turned an empty hotel room into the portrait of a whole era — and who the woman reading on the edge of the bed really is.

Practical tips

Best times

On weekdays first thing (it opens at 10:00) or in the late afternoon there are fewer people than at midday. Avoid Mondays from 12:00 to 16:00 if you're after peace and quiet: that's the free slot and it fills up.

Buy your ticket in advance

The Thyssen is one of Madrid's big three and, although it usually has shorter queues than the Prado, on long weekends, weekends and when there's a popular temporary exhibition the box office gets clogged. Buying your ticket online and choosing a time slot lets you get in almost straight away; arrive a few minutes before your time. (The free Mondays can't be booked: it's first come, first served until capacity is reached.)

Getting in free

Yes: on Mondays from 12:00 to 16:00 the permanent collection is free, with no booking required until capacity is reached; on Saturdays from 21:00 to 23:00 the temporary exhibitions open free of charge. There's also a reduced rate (€10) for students, over-65s and pensioners.

With children

It's a very manageable museum with little ones: a clear route, comfortable rooms and very narrative works. Going 'hunting' for animals, instruments or gestures in the pictures works really well. In 1-1.5 h you can see the essentials without wearing them out.

Accessibility and services

The museum is wheelchair accessible and lends folding chairs and stools at the cloakroom. There's a café with a terrace in the courtyard, a bookshop-store and left luggage for backpacks and suitcases. A good place for a break between the 2nd floor and the 1st.

Combine it

You're right in the middle of the Art Walk: the Prado and the Reina Sofia are a few minutes away on foot. There's a combined ticket for the three museums. One museum per morning pays off more than trying to do two in a row.

Practical info

Address: Paseo del Prado, 8 (Villahermosa Palace), 28014 Madrid. Metro: Banco de España (L2), 3 min away; also near Sevilla (L2) and Sol. Hours: Monday from 12:00 to 16:00 (collection free), Tuesday to Sunday from 10:00 to 19:00 and Saturdays until 21:00 (from 21:00 to 23:00 only the temporary exhibitions open free of charge); in summer (July and August) it extends Tuesday to Friday until 21:00 (Sundays still close at 19:00 and Saturdays at 21:00). Price: general admission €14; reduced €10 (over-65s, students); free for under-18s. Confirm hours, prices and possible closures for exhibition installations on the official website before you go.

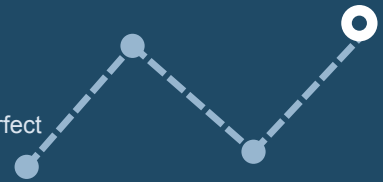
Official website: www.museothyssen.org

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Build your day-by-day route, discover what to see nearby and plan the perfect itinerary around the city. Free, no sign-up.

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Before you go in: book your skip-the-line ticket

On Civitatis, with free cancellation. Skip the ticket-office queue.

» **Buy your ticket**

THE COMPLETE VERSION

Take the complete visit

With this free guide you already cover the essentials. The PREMIUM is your complete visit to Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum: every work with its story, a 3-step looking guide for every painting, the cheat-sheet for your phone and the tips to skip the queues. For less than the price of a coffee.

In the free guide you miss out on:

- 2 Christ among the Doctors — Dürer**
Floor 2 (old masters) · 8 min
- 3 The Annunciation — El Greco**
Floor 2 (old masters) · 7 min
- 6 Swaying Dancer (Dancer in Green) — Degas**
Floor 1 (Impressionism) · 6 min

PREMIUM Guide · Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum

€4.99

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- ✓ All 7 works (the free guide has only 4), each with its story.
- ✓ «What it represents» and «How to look at it» in 3 steps: a looking guide for every painting.
- ✓ The «Route on one page» cheat-sheet for your phone, plus 1-, 2- and 3-hour routes.
- ✓ The timeline, the keys, the artist bios and a glossary to understand it all.
- ✓ As a PDF and offline: use it inside the museum without spending data.

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RISK-FREE GUARANTEE

If the guide doesn't help on your visit, write to us and we'll refund the €4.99. No questions asked.

For comparison: a guided tour costs €30-60 per person. This guide walks you through with the same detail, everyone travelling with you can use it, and it's yours forever.

Still no ticket? Book skip-the-line

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» **Check availability and prices**

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