

VISIT GUIDE 2026

the National Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum

Madrid · From 14€

https://museothyssen.visit-tickets.com/en/ · Skip-the-line tickets & rates



History & experience

ORIGIN & HISTORY

A collection that has become national heritage

GOOGLE 4.7 ★★★★★ 48 749 reviews

TIQETS 4.7 ★★★★★ 2 018 reviews

The history of the National Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum is inextricably linked to the saga of a Swiss industrialist family. It all begins with **August Thyssen**, an iron magnate, who initiated a private collection in Lugano at the beginning of the 20th century. It was his son, Heinrich, struck by the bankruptcies of the 1929 crisis, who turned this passion into an obsession: he acquired rare works from the 14th and 15th centuries, notably Flemish primitives, to diversify his assets and preserve European artistic heritage.

The collection grew under the impetus of Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza, who broadened its scope to include the 19th century and the early 20th-century avant-garde. He integrated major names of French Impressionism, as well as key figures such as Van Gogh, Gauguin, and German Expressionists. This exceptional accumulation creates a unique bridge between medieval art and modern art, a stylistic continuity that is rare worldwide.

In 1993, the Spanish state acquired the majority of this collection, estimated at over 800 works, in order to complement the existing national collections. The choice of site was not arbitrary: the museum is housed in the Villahermosa Palace, an 18th-century neoclassical building located on the Paseo del Prado. This strategic decision allows for the creation of a cultural golden triangle linking the Prado, Reina Sofía, and the Thyssen.

The interior has been meticulously renovated by architect Rafael Moneo, who modernized the spaces while respecting the historical soul of the palace. Today, the museum houses nearly 1,000 paintings covering eight centuries of Western art history, from Duccio to Pop Art. This temporal breadth makes it much more than a simple museum: it is a visual library where each room tells the story of an era, offering visitors a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of European styles.

THE EXPERIENCE

As soon as you cross the threshold of the Villahermosa Palace, the atmosphere changes dramatically. Natural light, filtered through the large skylights renovated by Rafael Moneo, bathes the canvases in a soft glow that highlights the ancient pigments. One immediately feels the solemnity of the place, softened by a clear and airy scenography that invites contemplation rather than a frantic rush. The space breathes, allowing visitors to move fluidly between eras without ever feeling overwhelmed.

The chronological route offers a unique narrative experience. Descending from the upper floors, dedicated to modern art, to the lower levels devoted to the primitives, one witnesses a reversed journey through time. This approach allows the visit to conclude with the classics, leaving a lasting impression of stability and grandeur. For lovers of Impressionism, the ambiance is particularly enchanting: the vibrant colors of Monet or the dynamism of Degas seem to vibrate under daylight, creating an intimate dialogue between the viewer and the work. It is a moment of intellectual and sensory pause, far removed from the tumult of the large crowds in neighboring museums.



PREPARE YOUR VISIT

Practical information

ADDRESS
Museums Quarter · Metro: Banco de España (L1, L10) or Prado (L2), 3 min walk.

OPENING HOURS
Open daily from 10am to 7pm. Free on Mondays from 12pm to 4pm (high attendance expected).

FEES
Permanent collection: €14. Paseo del Arte Pass: €32.80/year. {promo}.

VISIT DURATION
Allow at least 2 hours to explore the complete chronological collection. Plan for more if you wish to delve into the Impressionist rooms.

PHOTOS
Photography is allowed without flash in the permanent collections. Check specific rules for temporary exhibitions before taking your camera out.

AUDIENCE
Ideal for art lovers and curious families. The clear scenography makes the visit accessible to children aged 8 and up, while adults will appreciate the density

HOW TO GET THERE

Access & transport

Metro
: Atocha impares — 7 min à pied
Madrid-Atocha Station (9 min) · Sol (8 min)

Bus
: Círculo de Bellas Artes — 4 min à pied
Madrid-Atocha Station (12 min) · Sol (11 min)

Car

Madrid-Atocha Station (7 min) · Sol (5 min)

BiciMAD / Bike

Madrid-Atocha Station (7 min) · Sol (5 min)

LOCALISATION

Où se trouve the National Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum ?



📍 Paseo del Prado 8 — 28014 Madrid

🌐 40°24.962′ N, 3°41.696′ O



ORGANIZATION

An inverted chronological tour

Upper Levels (Modern & Contemporary Art)

This level houses the most modern galleries, covering the 19th century through to Pop Art. It features French Impressionist sections, German Expressionists, and 20th-century avant-garde movements. Works by Picasso, Dalí, and Hopper are displayed in a bright space. It is often the recommended starting point for those who wish to begin with contemporary art.

Intermediate Levels (Baroque & Classicism)

At the heart of the tour, this level showcases the masters of the 17th and 18th centuries. Here, one can admire the masterpieces of Rubens, Rembrandt, Vermeer, and Canaletto. Natural light is optimized to highlight the textures of the Baroque canvases. These rooms offer a striking contrast with the modernity of the upper floors and the rigor of the lower levels.

Ground Floor (Primitives & Renaissance)

The lower level is dedicated to the origins of European art, from the 13th to the 16th century. It features Italian and Flemish primitives, including the famous Diptych by Jan van Eyck. The atmosphere here is more contemplative, with small-scale works of remarkable technical precision. This is generally where the reverse chronological tour ends, on a note of classicism.

ACCESSIBILITY

♿ **Disabled Access**

Building renovated by Rafael Moneo, standard elevators and adapted access.

👨‍👩‍👧 **Families**

Clear and chronological scenography, suitable for curious children interested in art.

🎧 **Audio guide**

French, English, Spanish



Must-sees

SELECTION

The must-sees of the collection

01 **JAN VAN EYCK** Rooms Early Flemish Masters

Diptych of the Annunciation

This masterpiece of the 15th-century Flemish school illustrates the absolute technical mastery of the primitives. The realism of the details, from the textures of the clothing to the reflections on the metals, is of an unparalleled fineness for the time. The announcement of Christ's birth is treated with a luminous tenderness characteristic of Van Eyck. It is one of the first things to see to understand the impact of oil painting.

> 💡 The diptych survived several dispersals before joining the Thyssen collection, testifying to the erratic fortune of works of art during the European wars.

02 **CLAUDE MONET** Impressionist Rooms

Impression, Sunrise

The work that gave the Impressionist movement its name is an absolute icon. Rapid brushstrokes capture the mist over the port of Le Havre at dawn. Light seems to vibrate within it, breaking down forms into dabs of color. Observing this canvas is understanding how Monet revolutionized the perception of landscape and light in Western art.

> 💡 Originally, the painting was titled "Sunrise"; it was the critic Louis Leroy who used the mocking word "impression" during the 1874 exhibition, thus fixing the name of the movement.

03 **REMBRANDT VAN RIJN** European Baroque Rooms

Self-Portrait with Two Chains

This poignant portrait shows Rembrandt painting himself, with rare psychological intensity. The direct gaze and dynamic composition capture the creative moment. The chains may symbolize debt or death, adding a layer of mystery to the artist's self-analysis. It is a perfect example of the narrative depth of Dutch Baroque.

> 💡 The use of the mahlstick, visible in certain technical details, reveals the precise method Rembrandt employed to stabilize his hand during fine strokes.

04 **PIERRE PAUL RUBENS** European Baroque Rooms

Venus and Cupid

Rubens excels in the representation of sensuality and divine grace. Here, Venus and Love interact with a carnal tenderness that characterizes his flamboyant style. The warm colors and fluid drapery create an enchanting visual harmony. This work demonstrates why Rubens remains an essential reference of the European Baroque.

> 💡 Rubens produced a prodigious quantity of works; this canvas is often cited as an example of his ability to fuse ancient mythology with contemporary Baroque aesthetics.

05 **HANS HOLBEIN LE JEUNE** German School Rooms

Portrait of Henry VIII of England

Painted during the Wars of the Roses, this portrait is of remarkable iconographic precision. Holbein captures the majesty and royal power of Henry VIII with realistic coldness. Every detail of the attire and setting has political significance. It is a direct window into the 16th-century English court, as seen by a German master.

> 💡 Holbein was so faithful to the Tudor court that he painted several official portraits of Henry VIII, becoming the official portraitist of the dynasty.

06 **GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE** Impressionist Rooms

The Holy Family

Less known than his urban landscapes, this intimate painting depicts the artist's domestic life. Natural light floods the family scene, creating a peaceful and modern atmosphere. Caillebotte uses bold perspectives to structure the interior space. This work humanizes Impressionism, bringing it closer to bourgeois daily life.

> 💡 Caillebotte bequeathed his personal collection to the Musée d'Orsay after his death, but some of his private works, such as this one, have found their place in other public collections.

07 **EDGAR DEGAS** Impressionist Rooms

Nude Reclining

Degas explores the female form here with a sculptural sensibility. Unlike his ballet scenes, this work is more static and introspective. The soft color palette and asymmetrical composition reflect the influence of Japanese printmaking. It is a testament to the diversity of Degas's interests, ranging from theatrical movement to studio intimacy.

> 💡 Degas often worked from models posing in uncomfortable positions, seeking to capture anatomical truth rather than academic idealization.

08 **ALBRECHT DÜRER** German School Rooms

Jesus among the Doctors

Dürer brings mathematical rigor and spiritual depth to this biblical scene. The composition is complex, with numerous characters expressing different emotions. Dramatic light highlights the central figure of young Jesus. This work shows the influence of the Italian Renaissance on 16th-century German art.

> 💡 Dürer traveled to Italy, which profoundly influenced his style, integrating elements of Italian perspective and naturalism into his Northern practice.

TIPS

Preparing your visit to the Thyssen

TIMING

Avoid Monday from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM, which is free but very crowded. Instead, aim for a weekday morning or evening for a calm and contemplative experience.

TICKET

If you plan to visit the Prado and Reina Sofía, buy the "Abono Paseo del Arte" pass for €32.80. It's cheaper than three separate tickets and valid for one year, including skip-the-line access to the Thyssen.

TOUR

Start with the upper floors (modern art) and work your way down to the primitives. This reverse approach reduces visual fatigue and allows you to end with the classics, which are calmer.

PHOTO

Flash-free photography is allowed in the permanent collections. Avoid using a tripod, as it may obstruct traffic. The Impressionist rooms offer the best lighting conditions for your photos.

BREAK

After the visit, walk towards Retiro Park for a digestive break. You can also make a quick stop for churros near Plaza de Murillo before heading to the Prado.

CHILDREN

The chronological scenography is accessible from age 8. Focus on the Impressionist and modern rooms, where bright colors more easily capture children's attention than classical portraits.

AUDIOGUIDE

The audioguide is available in French. It is useful for contextualizing complex works, but it does not replace a guided tour in English (available until December 2026) for delving deeper into the anecdotes behind the masterpieces.

COMFORT

Travel light: the cloakroom is mandatory for large bags, which can lead to queues. Wear comfortable shoes, as you will be walking a lot along the Paseo del Prado.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

Is it mandatory to book entry to the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum?

It is not mandatory but strongly recommended, especially outside free hours. Booking a specific time slot guarantees your access and avoids endless queues. Without a reservation, access is subject to the museum's maximum

What is the difference between the permanent ticket and the temporary exhibition?

The base fee of €14 covers only the permanent collection. Major temporary exhibitions often require a surcharge or a separate specific ticket. Always check the fee details on the relevant exhibition page before purchasin

Where to buy tickets to avoid the queue?

Buy online via the official website or affiliated platforms by selecting your time slot. This method allows you to go directly to ticket control, saving waiting time at the physical box office.

Is it worth getting the Paseo del Arte Pass?

If you also plan to visit the Prado and Reina Sofía, the €32.80 pass is often cheaper than three separate tickets. It is valid for one year and gives access to the permanent collections of Madrid's three national museums

How much time should I allow to see the museum?

We recommend about 2 hours for a complete visit of the permanent collection. This timeframe allows you to appreciate the chronological progression of 8 centuries of art without excessive haste or unnecessary fatigue.

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

The Swiss heritage of Lugano

The collection was acquired by the Spanish State in 1993 from the Thyssen-Bornemisza family, based in Lugano. This transaction made it possible to reunite pieces scattered over more than two centuries, creating a unique coherence. The presence of marble sculptures commissioned directly by August Thyssen from Auguste Rodin adds a rare sculptural dimension to the painting collections.

A palace reinvented by Moneo

The historic building, the Villahermosa Palace, was redesigned by architect Rafael Moneo. His intervention modernized the spaces to meet the museum's requirements while preserving the original Neoclassical architecture. This symbiosis between old and new is an attraction in itself, with skylights flooding the rooms with natural light.

The German school is well represented

The section dedicated to the sixteenth-century German school includes more than 40 works, a notable density for this period. It features, in particular, major paintings by Albrecht Dürer and Hans Holbein the Younger. This concentration allows for a comparison of the styles and influences of this school, which was crucial for the European Renaissance.

Barcelona extension

Since 2004, a significant part of the collection, particularly Catalan painting, has been exhibited at the MNAC in Barcelona. This geographical expansion allows reaching a wider audience and highlighting Spanish regional art. If you are in Barcelona, do not forget to visit the MNAC to complete your exploration of the Thyssen collection.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

Located in the heart of the “Landscape of Light,” a UNESCO World Heritage site, the museum benefits from an exceptional setting. Right next door, the **Buen Retiro Park** offers an ideal green respite after the cultural intensity, with its shaded walkways and fountains. For a tasty break, head to Plaza de Murillo, where you can find authentic churreries serving **traditional churros** accompanied by thick chocolate. Just a few minutes’ walk away, the Royal Theatre dominates the square with its sumptuous neoclassical architecture, evoking the splendor of 19th-century Madrid. Finally, the immediate proximity to the Prado and Reina Sofía makes it easy to combine all three visits in a single day, taking advantage of the safe and pleasant pedestrian zone to stroll between the monuments.



Leaving the Thyssen-Bornemisza means taking with you a complete vision of Western art. This museum is not merely a repository of treasures; it is an essential **missing link** that connects the classical tradition to modern experimentation. Whether you are an expert or a novice, this visit will leave a lasting impression on you. Do not hesitate to return, as each glance at these masterpieces reveals new nuances. The Thyssen is an invitation to slow down, observe, and understand the beauty of our shared heritage.