

31 THINGS TO DO IN AUGUST

Staying in Madrid once the masses have vacated for the summer doesn't mean you have to be bored. Helen Jones tells us how to enjoy the best of the activities on offer, but without the queues



What better way to start the month than at the pool? There's still time to top up your tan before the weekend and municipal pools really are the place to be when the city's baking. Try Lago pool for beautiful bodies, straight and gay. **Centro Deportivo Casa de Campo**, tel: 91 463 00 50 (Metro: Lago). Open: 11am-9pm. €4.20. And see our guide to sunbathing on page 18.)

Your last chance to see *Swan Lake* on Gran Vía, as the Russian Imperial ballet ends its stint tonight. Air conditioning, men in tights and Tchaikovsky... could you think of a better way to spend a Sunday night in Madrid? **Teatro Compac, Gran Vía, 66**, tel: 91 541 55 69 (Metro: Gran Vía/Plaza de España). At the time of writing, tickets still available with www.entradas.com



Why not try seeing Madrid on horseback? See www.madrid.org/inforjoven and choose "Turismo y tiempo libre" for a complete guide to equestrian tourism around the province.



Get your fan and prepare to beat the Mari Carmens and Piils to a seat in the Plaza Mayor to listen to Daniel Barenboim's West-East Divan Orchestra. This group of young Palestinians and Israelis, conducted by one of the world's foremost musicians, will play the first act of Wagner's *Valkyrie*. By now an annual event, free entry makes arriving early a must. **Plaza Mayor**, (Metro: Sol). 10pm (entry from 7.30pm).



Join the Chamberí set with a trip to the Centro de Ocio Tercer Depósito. A cushioned jogging surface, small golf course, and paddle courts means the park is always full. After a swift 5k, pop into the bar for a drink and watch the urban sun go down. **Avda de Filipinas, 3-5** (Metro: Ríos Rosas). Free entry. www.cyii.es



The fiestas are starting in Lavapiés and it's time to prepare your stomach for *verbena*-eating. Food at these typical summer fairs includes *gallinejas* (fried lamb's intestines). Cool down with a *tinto de verano* (red wine and lemonade).



While Beijing starts to celebrate, Madrid will be carrying on with its fiestas. Head back to Lavapiés, where San Lorenzo and San Cayetano are still being toasted by locals and visitors alike.



August not only means less people but also less traffic. Set out early on Saturday morning for one of the swimming pools around the province. See <http://medioambiente.madrid.org> for more information on natural pools where you can spend the day, or go for a dip in Buitrago's fresh pool. **Piscinas Naturales de Rosequillo, Buitrago de Lozoya**, tel: 91 868 00 56.



Why not cool down with a stroll around the quiet gardens of Museo Sorolla? This space provides a haven of fountains and greenery in the centre of the city. **Museo Sorolla, c/General Martínez Campos, 37**, tel: 91 310 15 84 (Metro: Gregorio Marañón). Open: Tues, Fri and Sat, 9.30am-8pm; Sun and Bank Holidays, 10am-3pm; Wed-Thurs in summer 9.30am-11.30pm. Entry: €2.40. www.museosorolla.mcu.es



Veranos de la Villa festival is still saving us from summer cultural desolation. Today you can choose from the contrasting performances of Cuban dance bonanza Havana Rakatan or the very *castizo* La Verbena de la Paloma (zarzuela). See *Month Ahead* on page 5 for more information, and also www.esmadrid.com



Take the kids to be entertained at Casa Encendida, where shows every Tuesday form part of Titirilandia, the city's summer puppet festival. **Every Tues: 6.30pm and 8pm. Free entry but tickets must be obtained at the venue beforehand.** www.titirilandia.com



You deserve a relaxing day; head to the top of the Hotel Emperador in Gran Vía and enjoy a day at the rooftop pool. Then come back down to earth and straight into a show. *Beauty and the Beast* tickets are 20 percent cheaper in the summer. **Hotel Emperador, Gran Vía, 53**, tel: 91 547 28 00 (Metro: Gran Vía/Santo Domingo). Mon-Fri, 32 and Sat-Sun, 45 (Use of pool sun lounger and towel.) Pool opening times: 11am-9pm. Teatro Coliseum, Gran Vía, 78, tel: 91 547 66 12 (Metro: Plaza de España). Tickets at www.topticketline.es



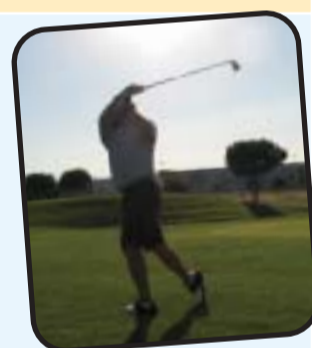
On the eve of one of Madrid's biggest *fiestas*, La Paloma, head to the Plaza Mayor and check out the traditional *madrileño* dress for *chulapos* and *chulapas*. If you want to show that you really are an adopted *madrileño*, shops around the Plaza Mayor sell children and adult versions. See *Scene*, page 5 for more information.



If your hangover can bear it, head back to La Latina for *tapas* and *cañas*, ready for more jollies this evening. Don't miss the firemen carrying the image of the virgin out of the small church on calle Paloma from around 8pm. (Metro: La Latina).



Practice your swing at Golf Olivar de Hinojosa, next to IFEMA, or head to the Parque Juan Carlos I next door where you can cycle to your heart's content. **Golf Olivar**, tel: 91 721 18 89 (Metro: Campo de las Naciones). www.golfolivar.com



El Parque del Capricho is so close to the airport that you've probably passed it many times. Secret passageways and quiet corners make this park heaven for anyone who just wants to lie down and smell the greenery. **El Capricho** (Metro: El Capricho) Opening hours: Sat, Sun and bank holidays only, 9am-9pm.



You might well have grown out of roller coasters and water rides a long time ago, but a trip to the Parque de Atracciones is a good excuse to have some fun and remember how easily pleased you were as a child. Thrills and spills for the more adventurous are matched by the quieter rides for the less ambitious. **Parque de Atracciones**, tel: 91 463 29 00 (Metro: Batán) Prices (unlimited use of attractions): €27.50 for adults and children over seven. Opening hours: 12pm-midnight (until 2am on Saturdays). www.parquedeatracciones.es



If you need to get rid of some pent-up energy try paintballing at Megacampo, near Collado Mediano, which has eight different circuits to entertain you. **Megacampo, just off the M-623 in Collado Mediano**, tel: 91 533 96 86. €21 per person (min.10), includes all equipment and 100 paintballs. www.estratego.es/megacampo



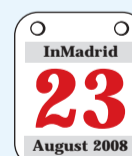
A 42-km drive north of Madrid will take you to El Molar, a small village where you can see typical rural houses and the more than 200 caves built into the surrounding mountains, which now house several restaurants and rural accommodation. It's also the scene of a recent drug bust. **Ayuntamiento del Molar, Plaza Mayor, 1, El Molar**, tel: 91 841 00 09 www.elmolar.org



Caixa Forum is celebrating the summer with its Noches de Verano season of Thursday night concerts. Tonight, electronic band Institut Fátima will perform for free in one of Madrid's newest exhibition spaces. **Caixa Forum, Paseo del Prado, 36**, tel: 91 330 73 00 (Metro: Atocha), 8pm. See *Scene*, page 5 for more information.



After a hot day at work, why not head to the Sky Light bar at Puerta de América for some summer jazz while you watch the city cool down. **Avenida de América, 41**, tel: 91 744 54 00 (Metro: Avenida América). Free entry. Copas, €12. For a cheaper option: Casa Guadalajara, Pza Santa Ana, 15, tel: 91 532 44 17 (Metro: Sol).



Take a trip out to Cercedilla's Amazonia adventure park, where six different tree-top assault courses will stretch your legs. The circuit can be found inside the Parque Recreativa Las Berceas, which has a swimming pool filled with natural spring water and set in a grassy hillside. **Aventura Amazonia**, tel: 902 511 462. €19 (adults), €14-17 (children). Open: Every day in August, 10am-8pm. www.aventura-amazonia.com Swimming pool, tel: 91 852 57 40, Open: 10am-8pm, €4.99-€5.62 (varies on weekdays and weekends).



Tessa Tejecuentos and her puppet friends will be giving a tea-time performance for children at ArtEspacio at 5pm. **ArtEspacio, c/Ercilla, 29**, tel: 91 474 97 65 (Metro: Palos de la Frontera) €11. www.plot-point.es



A trip to an open-air cinema is the perfect way to enjoy summer nights in Madrid. Tonight at Cine Parque la Bombilla, there's a tribute session to the great Spanish actor, Fernando Fernán Gómez. **Parque de la Bombilla, Avenida de Valladolid** (Metro: Príncipe Pio). 10pm, daily. €5.



Take a trip on the train from Madrid to Toledo. Once you get there, enter into one of Spain's most fascinating cities through the doors of Toletum, the new tourist reception centre. **Trains to Toledo leave from Atocha Station, 902 240 202.** www.renfe.es Toletum, tel: 902 103 909. €5 (adults), €3.75 (children). www.toletum.es



Head out to El Escorial and take a bike tour around Spain's most austere monument. For €75, Bike Spain Tours will pick you up from the centre of town and take you peddling around the province. **Bike Spain, Plaza de la Villa, 1**, tel: 91 559 06 54 (Metro: Sol/Opera). www.bike-spain.info



For some spooky fun for all the family, try one of theatre company Yllana's performances at Teatro Alfil. *Buuu!*, performed tonight, tells of the adventures of the magician Dragoon and his magic tricks. **Teatro Alfil, c/Pez, 10**, tel: 91 521 58 27 (Metro: Noviciado), Wed-Sat: 8.30pm; Sun: 6.30pm. €15 www.teatroalfil.com



Who said Madrid didn't have a beach? Go sailing and sunbathing at the Pantano de San Juan, near San Martín de Valdeiglesias, just over 45 minute's drive outside the city. **N-403 San Martín de Valdeiglesias and turn off onto the AV-502.** www.madrid.org



Wine courses are few and far between in August. Les Carte des Vins, offers wine courses this month. Here's your chance to learn the basics of wine tasting. **La Carte des Vins, seven branches throughout Madrid**, tel: 91 768 17 17 (Head office). Every Tues (Mellado, Hermosilla and Postas branches), 8.30-10pm. €20 per person. www.lacartedesvins.com



It's the last day of the summer sales for many shops in Madrid, so get in the bargains while you can. Head for Gran Vía for high street bargains, c/Bravo Murillo for shoes, or c/Serrano for some luxury last-minute buys.