CSIC
Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas

MUSEO NACIONAL DE CIENCIAS NATURALES
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OPENING TIMES
Tuesday to Friday 10 am - 5 pm.
Saturdays, Sundays and holidays 10 am - 8 pm.
Saturdays, Sundays and holidays in August
10 am - 3pm.
The ticket office closes 30 minutes before the end of visiting time.
Closed on not holiday Mondays, 1 and 6 January, 1 May and 25 December.

BUSES:
7, 12, 14, 27, 40, 45, 147 and 150

UNDERGROUND
Gregorio Marañón
República Argentina
Ríos Rosas
Nuevos Ministerios

RAILWAY STATION
Nuevos Ministerios

the museum's history

The National Museum of Natural Sciences (Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales) that we know today is the result of more than 200 years of history which began in 1771 when Charles III founded the Royal Cabinet of Natural History. At that time it already stood out as a prestigious centre due to its magnificent collections and its teaching and research work. It was a glorious period cut short by the political vicisitudes of the 19th century but which experienced a brief resurgence parallel to that of Spanish science at the beginning of the 20th century.

The present Museum building was born as the Palace of Industry and Fine Arts in 1887, destined as the headquarters of exhibitions and conferences. A century later, with the remodelling of the building in 1987, a new thrust was given to the Museum to pass on to being the most important centre for the research of natural sciences in the country, enlarging notably the space dedicated to both temporary and permanent exhibitions.

At the present the Museum forms part of the Spanish Council for Scientific Research (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-CSIC) in which around 300 professionals develop their work, distributed in three different areas: Research, Collections and Exhibitions and Public Programs.

simple-compound microscope (19th century)

research

The research objectives of the Museum are summed up in the description and conservation of the biological diversity and geology of our planet and at the same time the study of the mechanisms responsible for the genesis and maintenance of such diversity.

The organization of the Museum comprises the following Research Departments:

- Biodiversity and Evolutionary Biology
- Evolutionary Ecology
- Paleobiology
- Geology
- Biogeochemistry and Microbial Ecology
- Biogeography and Global Change

collections and documentation

The Museum hosts the most comprehensive Natural History collections in Spain, with more than eight million specimens. The collections, that constitute an essential work-tool in the investigation of the Natural Sciences, are distributed in the following areas: Insects, Non-insects Invertebrates, Malacology, Birds and Mammals, Fishes, Amphibians and Reptiles, Paleobotany, Vertebrate Fossils, Invertebrate Fossils, Geology, Tissues and DNA, Scientific Instruments, Fine Arts and Animal Sound Library.

The Documentation Service is made up of the Library and Archive.

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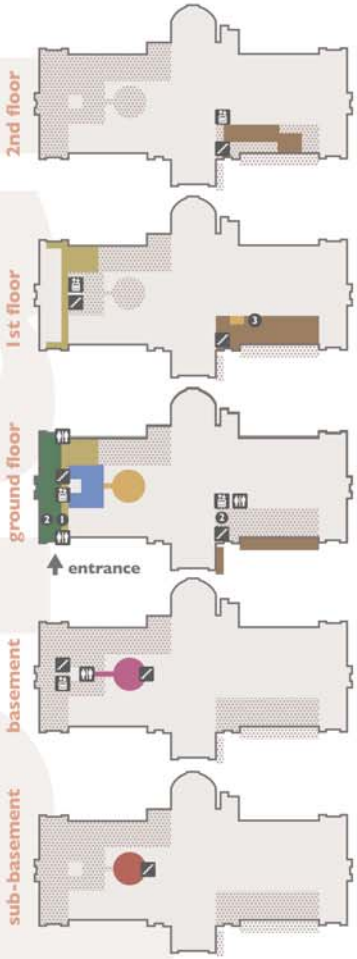
GENERAL INFORMATION

exhibitions and public programs



1. ticket office
2. shop
3. media library
- stairs
- elevator
- toilet
- permanent exhibition mediterranean nature and civilization
- permanent exhibition biodiversity
- permanent exhibition minerals, fossils and human evolution rock garden
- permanent exhibiton the royal cabinet
- permanent exhibition the storeroom
- temporary exhibition
- workshops and educational activities

Permanent Exhibitions

minerals, fossils and human evolution

This collection of **minerals** and rocks is displayed according to international classification and information is provided on their use, and industrial and economic significance.

Among the main features of this collection are specimens dating back to the Museum's origins and several precious metals and stones.

In the **Meteorites Room**, the visitor will find over 100 specimens from across the world including an exceptional collection of meteorites fallen in Spain since 1773.

Fossils reflect the evolution of life on Earth, from the beginning of life to modern day. The visitor to the Museum will be able to inspect several fossil types, the fossilization process and learn about historical aspects of research in the field of Paleontology. The collection of dinosaurs and other Mesozoic reptiles is a special attraction.

The Human Evolution room exhibits the fossils that have led to our current understanding of the origin of humanity, including specimens of the main fossils of australopiths and other hominids.

minerals gallery

biodiversity

This exhibition was set up to illustrate the topic of Biodiversity and inform visitors of its importance and the need for its conservation.

In the first section, the visitor will learn about the meaning of **Biodiversity** and will be shown the different biomes worldwide and how biodiversity manifests as different shapes, colours and interactions among different organisms.

The visitor is guided through a transition section, where the origin and tree of life is depicted, into a second section called **Biodiversity: the Result of Evolution**. In this space, the theory of evolution is described through natural selection and genetics.

Extinctions both in the remote past and more recent extinctions prompted by human activity guide the visitor into the next section of **Conservation**. This space houses some of the Museum's most prized specimens of extinct species such as the thylacine or great auk.

The exhibition ends with an area devoted to the work carried out by the Museum's researchers in promoting the conservation of endangered species such as the capercaillie, Iberian lynx, brown bear or dama gazelle.

With the support of:

biodiversity gallery

mediterranean: nature and civilization

The great diversity of life in the Mediterranean basin, the functioning of its ecosystems, its landscapes and its evolution, in tight relation with human intervention, are the themes treated in this exhibition, in which our terrestrial and marine fauna specimens play a key role. Many pieces are known to the public, others remained preserved in our storerooms and again come to light, while others make their debut like the giant squid from the genus *Architeuthis*. Here you can find a surprising and interactive new museographic scene equipped with the best technological media.

Mediterranean: nature and civilization is composed around the following fields: **Civilization and Terrestrial Biodiversity**, **Mediterranean Landscapes**, **Marine Biodiversity** and **The Giant Squid**.

the royal cabinet of natural history

The atmosphere of a Natural History Cabinet, the origin of current Natural Sciences Museum, reflects the spirit with which the objects in the original Museum were collected. Furthermore, other important events in the Museum's history are illustrated. This section houses a selection of the most emblematic historical pieces of the Museum including, among others, the Asian elephant and the oil painting, *The anteater* recently attributed to the artist Goya.

the storeroom

In this storeroom now open to the public, the visitor will find a little over 2% of the Museum's collection of birds and mammals. Here, numerous specimens from all five continents (998 birds, 204 mammals) can be viewed (Restricted visits).

rock garden

Open air collection of rocks and fossilized trunks, the great majority of which originate from the Community of Madrid. Some of the peculiarities of the specimens, such as type of rock in function of its origin, are described.

the mediterranean garden

Here the visitor can stroll through Mediterranean environments containing plant species native to this region, many of which may be found in the Madrid Community. A guide to these gardens can be purchased from the Museum shop.

temporary exhibitons

The Museum has at its disposal exhibition spaces where temporary exhibitions are periodically programmed.

workshops

Consult programs.