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One of those is the Palacio Real de Madrid, or Royal Palace of Madrid, and while it is the official residence of the King of Spain it is currently only used for state ceremonies, with the King and the Royal Family instead choosing to use the more modest Palacio de la Zarzuela on the outskirts of the city. Currently, the Royal Palace of Madrid is owned by the Spanish State and administrated by the Patrimonio Nacional, which is a public agency related to the Ministry of the Presidency, making it an official building in more than one sense. It is located just east of the Manzanares River on Bailen Street, in the western section of downtown Madrid, so if you want to explore the historic and royal buildings in the area the best thing to do is book your Madrid hotel close by. But, if you end up staying in one of the Madrid hotels across town it is still fairly easy to get to considering it is close to the Opera metro station. It is one of the few royal buildings in the world that remains open to the public, even when being used for official business, although it should be noted that it is only partially open when there are official state ceremonies occurring.

While the building itself only dates back to the mid 1700s, the actual site dates back to the 10th century when a fortress constructed by the Emir of Cordoba, Mohammed I, was first built on the location. When Madrid fell to Alfonso VI of Castile in 1085 the fortress was allowed to fall into ruin until in 1329 when things began to change. By 1561, Philip II had moved his entire court to Madrid and built the Antiguo Alcazar, or Old Castle, in the 16th century. It burned down in 1734, and King Philip V ordered a new palace built on the old location. This current building as it stands today was built over a period of time between 1738 and 1755, making it 300 years old in just another couple of decades. The palace is a vast array of opulence, and no matter where your Madrid hotel is located you will be hard-pressed to find your breath on the way back. Visitors from around the world staying in Madrid hotels come here every year, and artists such as Velasquez, Tiepolo, Mengs, and Caravaggio line the walls. The Royal Armoury contains weapons dating back to the 13th century, and the palace also contains the world's only complete Stradivarius string quintet, as well as one of the largest collections of tapestries, porcelain and furniture in the world. In addition there is the Royal Chapel as well as the Royal Pharmacy and a variety of other wonders within.

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