

The Royal Observatory of Madrid (IGN) is devoting a great deal of personnel and resources to the preservation and promotion of its valuable architectural heritage and its ancient scientific instrumentation. During the last years, the room of the Meridian Circle was restored, with its telescope and historic clocks, and well as the Library of the Villanueva Building, in which a Foucault pendulum was installed. The Large 25-foot Herschel Telescope was reconstructed and it was installed in a new pavilion. The valuable collection of ancient scientific instruments of the Observatory, together with others from IGN, is exposed in the modern Hall of Earth and Universe Sciences; this is a collection assembled in the course of nearly 230 years of history.



Library at the Villanueva building.

## VISITOR ACCESS

### Open enclosure



### Enclosure closed



All information about the schedule:  
[www.ign.es/rom/visitas/index.html](http://www.ign.es/rom/visitas/index.html)



### RESERVATIONS:

Phone no. 91 597 95 64 (Monday to Friday 8:30 to 14:00)

Phone no. 91 506 12 61 (Weekends)

[www.ign.es](http://www.ign.es)

[reservas.rom@cnig.es](mailto:reservas.rom@cnig.es)

**Royal Observatory of Madrid**  
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### ¿HOW TO GET?



Line 1. Atocha or Atocha Renfe Station.



All Renfe commuter train lines. Atocha Station.



Lines 10, 14, 19, 27, 32, 34, C1 y C2

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GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO DE FOMENTO

INSTITUTO GEOGRÁFICO NACIONAL

IGN

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## ROYAL OBSERVATORY OF MADRID

### GUIDED TOURS



On front cover: current view of the Villanueva Building; detail of Herschel telescope's reconstruction and enclosing pavilion; entrance to Hall of Earth and Universe Sciences; Foucault pendulum.

Right: portrait of King Charles III, Juan de Villanueva and William Herschel.



Meridian circle room, and clocks.

The origins of the Royal Observatory of Madrid (ROM) date back to the reign of Charles III who, at the proposal of the famous sailor and cosmographer Jorge Juan, ordered its creation in the late eighteenth century (around 1785). As main missions of the Observatory, its Royal Order of creation (issued in 1790, reigning then Charles IV) set the theory and practice of astronomy, geodesy, geophysics and cartography, i.e. those of an astronomy and Earth sciences observatory, as were most of those created at the time. And to carry out these missions, in 1796 the Corps of Cosmographer Engineers was created.

The construction of the building for the observatory was commissioned to the most famous architect of the time, Juan de Villanueva, choosing for the site a hill known as "Cerrillo de San Blas" (due to a small chapel dedicated to that saint), in what was then the outskirts of Madrid.

At first, the Observatory commissioned the famous Anglo-German astronomer, William Herschel, the construction of a reflecting telescope of 25 feet (7.5 m) focal length and a mirror of 2 feet (63 cm) in diameter, which would be considered by Herschel as the best of his telescopes ever built.

In 1865, the Observatory changed its official name to Astronomical and Meteorological Observatory of Madrid, taking care to lead the national meteorology until 1904, when the Observatory becomes part of the National Geographical Institute (IGN), and meteorological activities (which had been in charge of the Observatory since its foundation in 1790) come to depend directly from IGN.



Watercolor of Herschel's telescope.



Interior of the Hall of Earth and Universe Sciences.