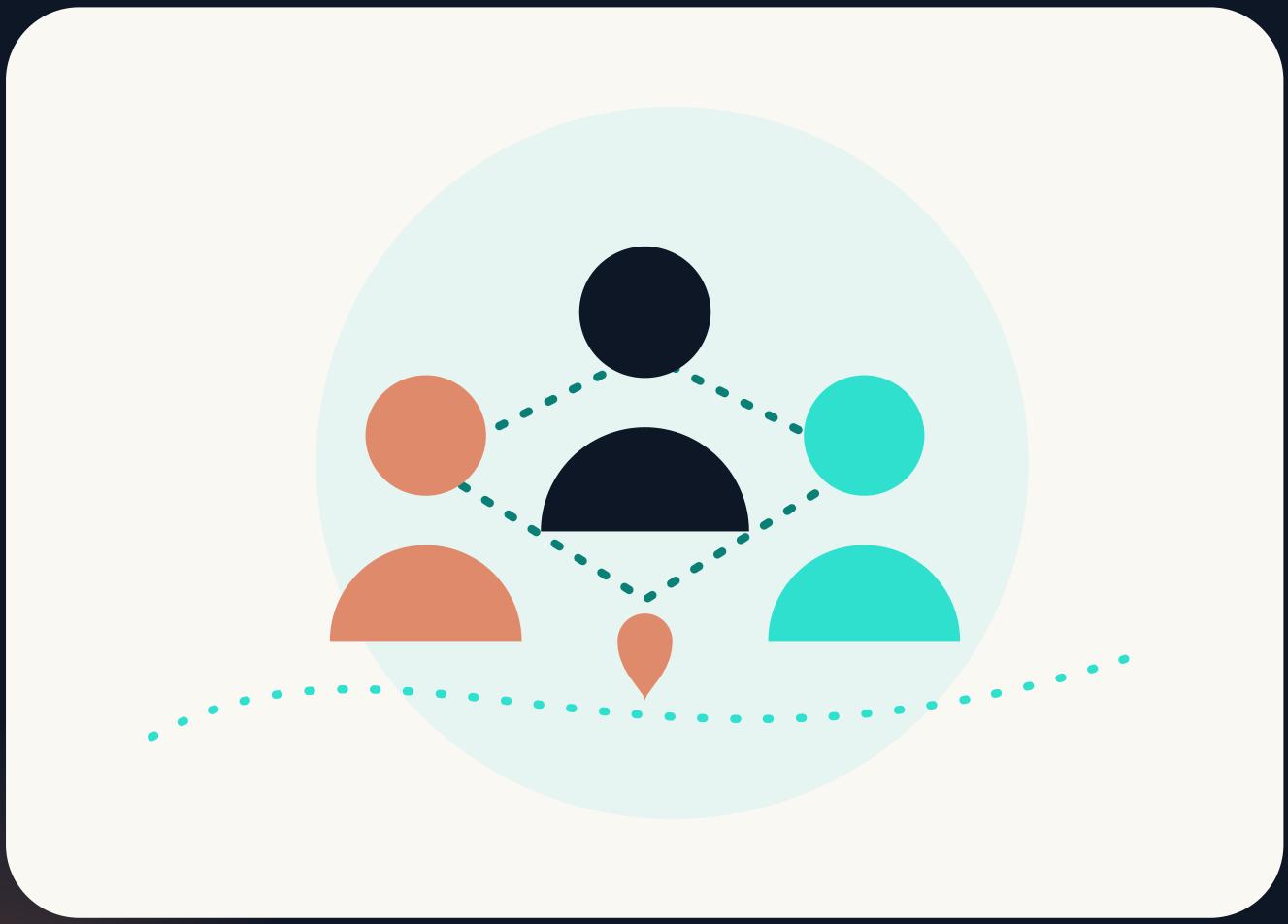
NOA

08

MADRID GUIDE · 08

Meeting new people

The biggest fear on arrival usually isn't the paperwork, but being alone. It can be avoided.



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How to read the labels: Official information from a public administration. Checked by NOA checked in several sources, not official. Students' experience advice from the community.

Where to start

- **Welcome activities at your university** and at international student associations (for example, the ESN sections at many Madrid universities).
- **Language exchanges (tandem):** you meet someone who wants to practise your language while you practise Spanish. It's one of the best ways to meet local people.
- **Sport:** university clubs, municipal sports centres, running groups in El Retiro or Madrid Río.
- **Volunteering:** a way to get to know the real city and make friends with similar values.
- **Interest groups:** music, photography, board games, hiking... platforms like Meetup have lots of communities in Madrid.

Tips that work

- **Say yes to plans in the first weeks**, even if you're tired. That's when everyone is open to meeting people.
- **Repeat:** friendship grows from seeing the same people several times, not from one big event.
- **Mix:** it's fine to have friends from your country, but try to have at least one weekly plan with local people or other nationalities.
- **Suggest it yourself:** "Shall we get a drink after class?" works better than you think.

Looking after yourself

- Meet in public places the first few times you meet someone from the internet.
- Feeling lonely some days is normal. If it lasts for weeks, talk to someone: your university usually has a psychological support service.

The NOA community

NOA exists precisely so that nobody arrives in Madrid without knowing anyone. **We're building the community with students like you.** If you'd like to tell us what would have helped you, or be part of the community from the start, get in touch.

If you're family

Rather than asking whether they've made friends yet, ask what plans they've made. If you notice long-lasting isolation, encourage them to join an activity with a fixed schedule (sport, languages, volunteering): shared routines build bonds.

Checklist

- [ ] Go to a welcome activity
- [ ] Sign up for a language exchange
- [ ] One fixed weekly plan (sport, club, volunteering)

This guide is for guidance only and is updated often. For legal procedures, always check the official source or your university. NOA does not replace legal or medical advice.
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