

# Cold snap brings Spain lowest temperatures in 20 years

January 12 2021, by Aritz Parra

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In this photo made available on Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021, by the European Space Agency, a view of a Copernicus Sentinel-2 image of Madrid, Spain. The image appears to have been taken in black and white. In fact, it is a true-colour image – but the heaviest snowfall in 50 years has blanketed the region, turning the landscape white. Much of Spain is struggling to return to normality three days

after a 30-hour-long record snowfall that was then hardened by record-low temperatures, turning streets and roads into dangerous ice sheets in areas not used to extreme winters. (European Space Agency via AP)

Much of Spain struggled Tuesday in the aftermath of a massive snowfall that hardened into ice amid a record cold snap that turned streets and roads into safety hazards in areas unaccustomed to extreme winters.

Overnight temperatures were the coldest since at least 2001 and dropped in some places to the lowest since 1982, according to the Spanish weather agency AEMET. Schools remained closed in Madrid and much of central Spain, and 11 of the country's 51 provinces and autonomous regions were at the highest weather alert level.

The town of Bello, in the northeastern Teruel province, registered a temperature of minus 25.4 degrees Celsius (minus 13.7 F), and the town of Molina de Aragón, in the central Guadalajara province, was only a tenth of a degree warmer.

In Madrid and the capital's surrounding region, home to 6.6 million people, thermometers plummeted to up to minus 16 degrees Celsius (3.2 F). However, the day turned out to be sunny, offering some relief to people trying to get to work and the emergency and military crews working to reopen roads, reestablish [power lines](#) and to ensure the distribution of food and coronavirus vaccines.

Authorities urged people to stay at home unless absolutely necessary to prevent accidents that could further strain hospital emergency rooms. A military hospital in the capital saw a worrying uptick in trauma cases, Defense Minister Margarita Robles said late Monday.





A woman emerges from a subway station in Madrid, Spain, Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021. Schools remain closed in Madrid and many other parts of central Spain, with authorities focusing on reopening roads and stocking up supermarkets, struggling with the largest snowfall in half a century and record-low temperatures. (AP Photo/Paul White)

Visiting the operation center of a military emergency unit, Spanish Prime Minister Spanish Pedro Sánchez thanked civil protection crews and soldiers.

"We have had to live difficult and complex times, but we will move forward because the Spanish society does not give up in the face of adversity," he said in televised comments.

Storm Filomena left up to half a meter (20 inches) of snow across large swaths of Spain over a 30-hour period that started Friday morning. Five people, including two [homeless people](#) in Barcelona, died as a result of the blizzard and the ensuing [cold snap](#), the government reported.

The Madrid regional government said Tuesday it was still waiting for a new batch of 48,750 Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus [vaccine doses](#) that had been due to arrive the day before by plane but had to be diverted to a northern Spanish airport.



A military police officer clears snow and ice from the street in Madrid, Spain, Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021. Spain is grappling to return normality after the largest snowfall in half a century but record-low temperatures have formed ice that are sending many citizens to already strained hospital emergency rooms. Schools remain closed in Madrid and many other parts of central Spain, with authorities

focusing on reopening roads and stocking up supermarkets. (AP Photo/Paul White)

The regional health department told The Associated Press that the delay was not expected to affect the local vaccine drive, which continued at nursing homes and among health personnel with doses delivered earlier.

At the headquarters of SUMMA 112, the Madrid emergency service, a makeshift vaccination center was created in a warehouse basement to administer jabs to some 1,500 employees.

"It is s very important for the world's population that we all get vaccinated to end this pandemic," said Pedro Lara, an ambulance technician who got his first dose Tuesday. "It's the only way to end it."

The capital's airport, the busiest in the country, was expected to get back to full operation on Tuesday. Trains were steadily increasing in frequency, although Madrid's subway and commuter trains were dangerously overcrowded.





A worker wheels a food delivery trolley in the snow and ice in Madrid, Spain, Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021. Schools remain closed in Madrid and many other parts of central Spain, with authorities focusing on reopening roads and stocking up supermarkets, struggling with the largest snowfall in half a century and record-low temperatures. (AP Photo/Paul White)



A man drags a garbage container through snow and ice in Madrid, Spain, Monday, Jan. 11, 2021. The Spanish capital is trying to get back on its feet after a 50-year record snowfall that paralyzed large parts of central Spain over the weekend. (AP Photo/Paul White)





A man walks across a street covered with snow and ice in Madrid, Spain, Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021. Much of Spain is struggling to return to normality three days after a 30-hour-long record snowfall that was then hardened by record-low temperatures, turning streets and roads into dangerous ice sheets in areas not used to extreme winters. Schools remain closed in Madrid and much of central Spain, with emergency and military crews still working to reopen roads, remove fallen trees, re-establish power lines and ensure the distribution of food and coronavirus vaccine. (AP Photo/Paul White)





A man walks down an icy street in Madrid, Spain, Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021. Schools remain closed in Madrid and many other parts of central Spain, with authorities focusing on reopening roads and stocking up supermarkets, struggling with the largest snowfall in half a century and record-low temperatures. (AP Photo/Paul White)



A woman walks through the snow in Madrid, Spain, Monday, Jan. 11, 2021. The Spanish capital is trying to get back on its feet after a 50-year record snowfall that paralyzed large parts of central Spain over the weekend. (AP Photo/Manu Fernandez)





A woman walks along Paseo Castellana covered with the snow in Madrid, Spain, Monday, Jan. 11, 2021. The Spanish capital is trying to get back on its feet after a 50-year record snowfall that paralyzed large parts of central Spain over the weekend. (AP Photo/Manu Fernandez)

In a preliminary assessment, Madrid City Hall estimated that at least 150,000 of the city's 800,000 trees fell from the weight of unfamiliar snow.

Madrid's main retail market reopened Tuesday for the first time since Friday, leading to frantic activity of trucks and vans delivering the fresh produce that had been in short supply at supermarkets.

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