

Hotels — Rooms with a view

If there is one thing to take from this guide it's that Madrid isn't lacking in colour and diversity – and that's certainly the case for accommodation and hospitality. Even though quite a few hotels belong to international chains, they still have a palpable Spanish flavour to them: bespoke furnishings are made by local designers and delicious menus prepared by Madrid's top chefs. The generous patios and endless rooftop terraces offering mind-blowing views of the capital don't hurt either.

Meanwhile, many independent hotels and smaller chains have made serious investments in art displays. If you find yourself thinking that the bright hues and lavish decorations in your chosen lodging are a touch overpowering, remember: this is Madrid. Extravagance is a given.



1 Hotel de Las Letras, Cortes
Updated elegance

The eloquent Hotel de Las Letras is within walking distance of a cluster of museums and galleries. The heritage-listed, peach-coloured building was designed by architect Cesáreo Iradier in 1917 and renovated in 2005. Ornate flourishes such as the carved wooden staircase coalesce with the hotel's modern, minimalist decor. While the dense colour blocking in the 109 rooms can be a little overwhelming, the floor-to-ceiling windows filter in the Madrid sunshine and provide a prime vantage point for observing the bustle of Gran Vía.

The relaxed menu by chef Paco Morales is best enjoyed on the buzzy, plant-strewn rooftop terrace, a popular spot for sunset drinks during the warmer months.
Gran Vía 11, 28013
+34 915 237 980
hoteldelaslettras.com

MONOCLE COMMENT: For the health-conscious, the hotel has a 24-hour gym with the latest stretch-and-tone equipment. Or, if the weather permits, head due east along Calle Alcalá, where you'll find the city's outdoor sporting facilities in the Buen Retiro Park (see page 110).

2 Room Mate Alicia, Las Letras
Winning form

Former Olympic equestrian Kike Sarasola founded his design-led boutique-hotel collection Room Mate in 2004. Since then the brand has become a favourite of creative types attracted to its individuality and welcoming staff.

Alicia, positioned on the bustling Plaza de Santa Ana, is one of four Room Mate locations in Madrid. Its 34 rooms are simply furnished and overlook the lively square below. The substantial daily breakfast is served in the dining room until noon, so there's no excuse for missing it.

Calle Prado 2, 28014
+34 913 896 095
alicia.room-matehotels.com

MONOCLE COMMENT: This affordable luxury alternative takes customer service seriously. Nothing is too difficult to organise, including transfers by private car, travel reservations, medical care and babysitting options.



Light meal
—
Breakfast is served in The Conservatory until 11.00

3 Urso, Las Salesas
Starring role

Top-notch service, an underground spa and an innovative restaurant starring new guest chefs each month are a few of the features that set Urso apart from its peers in the capital. It is also the first five-star boutique hotel in the city and makes a point of sourcing all of its food, flowers and chocolates from suppliers in the area.

Architect Antonio Obrador has conserved many of the original late-19th-century building's features, such as the tiles on the walls, the mahogany lift and the stained-glass windows in the lobby. All 78 rooms and suites profit from big windows, linen of the highest quality and custom-made furniture, while the spa offers all manner of treatments by Spanish skincare specialist Natura Bissé.
Calle Mejía Lequerica 8, 28004
+34 914 444 458
hotelurso.com



I favour a massage after each meal – and my second breakfast was delicious

MONOCLE COMMENT: Urso's restaurant welcomes a different top chef with a special pop-up menu (and kitchen) each and every month. Everything changes, from the palate-pleasing cuisine to the palette that is used for the interior design.