

INTRODUCING MADRID

Few cities can boast an artistic and gastronomic pedigree quite as impressive as Madrid. The city is full of world-class art galleries and restaurants serving up innovative twists on Spanish cuisine. Enjoy days wandering past medieval mansions & royal palaces, and after-dark reveling in the bars and barrios.

Madrid Barajas International Airport (MAD) is the second largest airport in Europe. With flights connecting the city to all over the globe, it would be a crime not to visit! There's a convenient metro train from the airport straight to Nuevos Ministerios Metro station in the centre of Madrid. But we'd recommend booking a private transfer to get your customers right to their hotel door.

Madrid is a melting pot of food from every region of Spain. Andalusian bars boasting great *gazpacho* sit alongside Galician bars offering heaping plates of *pulpo a feira* (octopus). Madrid's own typical food is well worth your time too - make sure to try the traditional pork stew *Cocido Madrileño*!

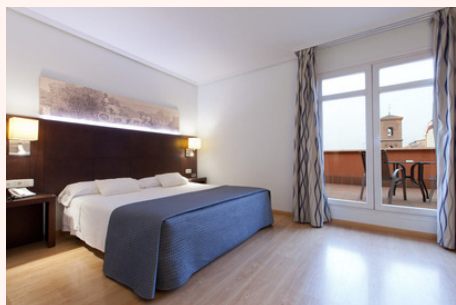
With more bars per capita than any other country in the EU, you'll be spoilt for choice in Madrid. Make the most of being in the country of La Rioja (red wine), as prices are cheaper and quality is higher. But if you want to drink like local, start later - most locals don't hit the bars til gone 11pm!

KEY SITES

- **The Prado Museum** - absolutely essential, the Prado is one of the best and most popular art museums in the world. Even non-art-buffs will be impressed by the overwhelming collect of masterpieces on display. Art-lovers must also visit the brilliant **Reina Sofia Museum**.
- **The Royal Palace** - built in the mid-1700s on the site of a Moorish fortress, it's the largest palace in Western Europe. You have to go inside to get the full experience!
- **Gran Vía** - if you want to get a sense of the city, a walk along the Gran Vía is a superb place to start. It's Madrid's entertainment, shopping & cultural nerve centre, a buzzing avenue often full of life until dawn. By day it throngs with shoppers and after dark the street pulses with many of Madrid's top nightclubs.
- **Plaza Mayor** - an impressive Renaissance square, surrounded by cafes, perfect for people-watching. Meanwhile the more modern **Plaza de España** attracts many tourists as a central point to relax in.
- **Retiro Park** - Madrid's green heart and full of elegant gardens, the Retiro was a royal property up to the end of the C19th when it was opened to the public.

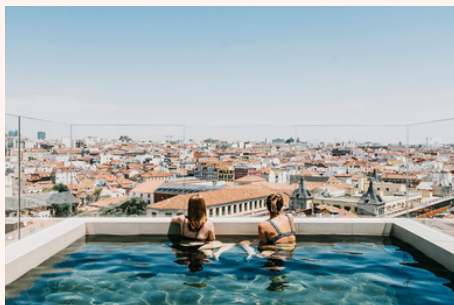
WHERE TO STAY

HOTEL GANIVET - 3*



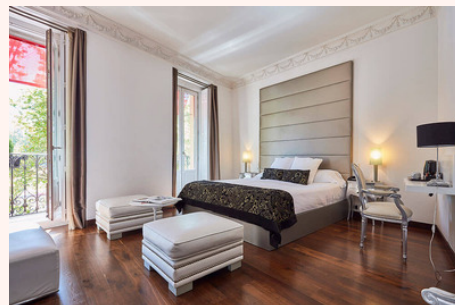
Set in the area of Puerta de Toledo, this sweet 3* hotel is walking distance to Madrid's main attractions. Offering a rooftop jacuzzi and swimming pool with solarium, it's a great base to explore the city from, or relax at the end of a hard day's sightseeing! With luggage storage, café offering a local breakfast buffet, and rooms with air conditioning, it's convenient as well as comfy.

DEAR HOTEL - 4*



This boutique design hotel in the heart of Madrid has epic views over Gran Vía & Plaza de España from the panoramic rooftop terrace. With a 360° outlook, guests can relax at the lounge & restaurant or the Sky Pool! Rooms are designed to make guests feel at home, with neutral tones and modern furnishings. With a 4.5 rating on TripAdvisor too, no wonder this is one of our most popular 4*s!

HOSPES PUERTA DE ALCALA - 5*



In the Salamanca district, next to Puerta de Alcalá and the inspiring El Retiro park, this hotel is housed in a beautiful C19th royal building. Alongside its luxurious interiors, it offers guests a great gastronomic experience, with restaurant 'Malvar' serving innovative cuisine overlooking the Puerta de Alcalá monument. There's also a spa for pampering, and spacious rooms to relax in.

TOURS

Authentic Tapas & History Tour

Get an original insight into Spanish culture, history and gastronomic tradition on this brilliant walking tour. Guides are Madrid-born connoisseurs who will take you to the best hidden spots in the city. Taste Iberian ham, chorizo, local cheese, gazpacho, croquettes, and other delicious food and drink. Afterwards your guide will be happy to suggest where best to continue enjoying the city at night!

Private City Tour

Whether visiting the city for the first time, or itching to dig deeper under the city's skin, a 2 hour private city tour is a brilliant way to learn more! Your English-speaking driver/guide will tailor the day to your preferences. (And the rates are really reasonable too!)

Half Day Toledo Tour

Just 70km from Madrid is the beautiful UNESCO World Heritage city of Toledo. One of the oldest towns in Europe, it has architecture from almost all periods of history (Arabian, Gothic, Mudejar, Renaissance and Baroque!). On this half day tour your guide will show you sights including the Church of St. Tome, Synagogue of Santa Maria la Blanca and Monastery of San Juan de los Reyes (entrances included).

Penelope Cruz's Top Tip!

Shopping in Madrid is a delight - you'll find all the best European high-street brands & designers. The best areas to go are the Plaza Mayor, Gran Vía, Puerta del Sol and nearby streets. Penelope Cruz even owns a clothing store in Madrid!

