

## SLEEP: MADRID

THE STYLE-CONSCIOUS CAPITAL KNOWS HOW TO TREAT ITS GUESTS — FROM LUXURY LODGINGS AMID THE HISTORY OF LOS AUSTRIAS, AND A LITERARY-THEMED HOTEL IN UP-AND-COMING GRAN VÍA AND CHUECA, TO A CUT-PRICE 'HOSTAL' IN THE EXCLUSIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF SALAMANCA.  
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### MADRID DE LOS AUSTRIAS

THE CAPITAL'S OLDEST neighbourhood gets its name from the Habsburg dynasty (known in Spain as Casa de Austria) that ruled Spain during the 16th century, leaving an impressive architectural legacy in and around the Plaza Mayor. It's not short on modern touches either with the likes of the sublime Mercado de San Miguel food hall worth a visit. Unsurprisingly, with sights including the Royal Palace, the Teatro Real opera house and the Plaza de la Villa square, as well as a host of traditional tapas bars and Castilian restaurants, the area teems with both tourists and locals.

#### WE RECOMMEND:

##### CASA DE MADRID

If you're looking for an intimate five-star experience with a twist, book into the Casa de Madrid, billing itself as a 'charming luxury house — not a hotel'. Located in an 18th-century listed building, the Casa has just seven rooms and is geared towards offering a romantic stay with dreamy views of the Royal Palace from its balconies. Choose from the opulently themed rooms — with names such as Lavender Blue, Greek Agora and The Leaves of April — and then settle in to enjoy a stay fit for a lord and lady. In fact, you'll be guided on your visit to the Spanish capital not only by the friendly and

capable staff, but also by the owner, Marta Medina Muro, an aristocratic character who makes it her business to ensure guests feel at home. Timeless and charming with its decadent library and lounge, it's the type of place that will transport you to a bygone era, as long as you switch off your smartphone.

■ **Rooms:** From €100 (£88) for a single room.

*Calle Arrieta 2, 2a, Madrid 28013. T: 00 34 91 55 95 791. [www.casademadrid.com](http://www.casademadrid.com)*

■ **X-factor:** The staff, who will do their utmost to make your stay unforgettable.



#### BEST FOR PEOPLE

##### WATCHING: HOSTAL ORIENTE

Book (well in advance) a room facing Isabel II Square and you'll not only have a great view of the plaza, dominated by the Teatro Real opera house, you'll be just minutes away from Sol, the city's heart.

■ **Rooms:** From €40 (£35) for a single room. *Calle Arrenal 23, Madrid 28013. T: 00 34 91 548 03 14. [www.hostalorientes.com](http://www.hostalorientes.com)*

#### BEST FOR HISTORY BUFFS:

##### POSADA DEL PEINE

The city's oldest lodgings near the main square, Plaza Mayor, is a historical hub. Nearby there's Ópera Metro station, a museum with 16-17th-century archaeological finds, while El Botín, the world's oldest restaurant, is just around the corner.

■ **Rooms:** From €100 (£88) for a double room. *Calle Postas 17, Madrid 28012. T: 00 34 91 52 38 151. [www.hotel-posadadelpeine.com](http://www.hotel-posadadelpeine.com)* >>

## HUERTAS

WHETHER YOU WANT to party, take a tapas tour or soak up some culture, you'll be well catered for in Huertas, another Madrid neighbourhood steeped in history and teeming with life. Calle Huertas itself is where to head to join the hordes of locals and tourists for a booze-soaked night out, whereas Plaza Santa Ana boasts bars and restaurants aplenty (a few of which were Hemingway haunts). The first edition of 'the first modern novel', *Don Quixote*, was printed in this neighbourhood, whose reputation as a hotbed of literary activity is alluded to in its alternative name of Barrio de las Letras (Neighbourhood of the Arts).



### WE RECOMMEND:

#### LA PEPA CHIC BED & BREAKFAST

Madrid is finally doing proper bed and breakfast. This new *hostal* focuses on budget travel with a difference. The brainchild of the eponymous Pepa (whose real name is Irma), the lodgings are the first in the city to adopt the classic British B&B formula — with a Spanish touch, naturally. Every last detail has been taken care of, from the refit of the plumbing to ensure showers pump out jets of steaming-hot water, even if they're all running at the same time, to the huge, plump mattresses, guaranteeing a great night's sleep. The communal breakfast area gives you a chance to get to know your fellow guests, while kooky services such as 'your friend in Madrid' — a personalised tour of the city with a local as a guide — top off the charm. Throw in an excellent location, right next to the world-famous 'Golden Triangle of Art' (the Prado, Reina Sofia and Thyssen-Bornemisza Museums), and you've got an unbeatable combination.

■ **Rooms:** From €60 (£53) for a single room with breakfast. *Plaza de las Cortes 4, 7 dcha, Madrid, 28014.* T: 00 34 91 369 27 14 / 00 34 648 474 742. [www.lapepa-bnb.com](http://www.lapepa-bnb.com)

■ **X-factor:** Top-class facilities and great attention to detail at a rock-bottom price.



#### BEST FOR ROOFTOP SUNBATHING: HOTEL URBAN

Locations don't come much better than Hotel Urban's. Situated right next to the nightlife of Huertas, and just a short walk from the city's major art galleries, this five-star hotel may look a tad impersonal from the outside, thanks to its sleek glass and steel facade, but inside it's another story, with a warm and modern feel to the 102 rooms. The real attraction, though, is the rooftop terrace, complete with a swimming pool. Be sure not to leave without trying the oysters and cocktails in the Glass Bar.

■ **Rooms:** From €190 (£166) for a single room. *Carrera de San Jerónimo 34, Madrid, 28014.* T: 00 34 91 787 77 70. [www.derbyhotels.com/en/hotel-urban/](http://www.derbyhotels.com/en/hotel-urban/)

#### BEST FOR VIEWS: ME MADRID

Once the hotel of choice for visiting bullfighters, the ME Madrid is located in the heart of the capital on the Plaza Santa Ana, which is packed with terrace bars and restaurants catering to a wide range of palates and budgets. The hotel's 192 rooms with free wi-fi guarantee a luxurious stay but the jewel in its crown is the Tower Suite, which affords stunning views of the city from the summit of the building, complete with private whirlpool bath. If that's out of your price range, then a drink at the exclusive Penthouse bar — also on the rooftop of the main building — is the next best thing.

■ **Rooms:** From €354 (£310) for a single room. *Plaza de Santa Ana 14, Madrid, 28012.* T: 00 34 91 701 6000. [www.memadrid.com/es](http://www.memadrid.com/es) >>

## CHUECA

IF THERE'S AN area that best reflects the rebirth of Madrid over the past 20 years, it would have to be Gran Vía and Chueca. The latter neighbourhood was once rundown and neglected, but has now been transformed into one of the world's finest gay quarters and shopping districts. The historic Gran Vía, meanwhile, has also been dragged into the 21st century, thanks to the arrival of a host of major retailers and musical theatres, giving it the air of both Oxford Street and Broadway. Don't leave without taking a wander down Calle Fuencarral, which has long been a Mecca for the fashion-conscious Madrileño.



### WE RECOMMEND: HOTEL DE LAS LETRAS

Poetic without being twee, the walls of this literary-themed hotel are decorated with quotations from famous writers in a number of different languages. Much of the original tiling in the building, dating from 1917, has been preserved, while the refurbishment of the rest of the hotel has been exquisitely finished. Of particular note are the rooftop terrace, with stunning views, and the library. Ask and the staff may give you a tour of the historic parts of the building (closed off to guests), much of which is protected as part of the region's heritage. Across the street is classic nightclub Bar Chicote, where you can sip cocktails to a soundtrack provided by its roster of DJs, and Mercado de la Reina, a superb tapas restaurant with a gin bar at the rear.

■ **Rooms:** From €104 (£91). *Calle Gran Vía 11, Madrid, 28013. T: 00 34 91 523 79 80. [www.hoteldelasletras.com](http://www.hoteldelasletras.com)*

■ **X-factor:** The duplexes, with private terraces and whirlpool baths.

### BEST FOR ROOFTOP COCKTAILS: ROOM MATE ÓSCAR

Part of the home-grown Room Mate chain, cutting-edge Óscar is in the heart of this vibrant neighbourhood. Night owls staying to sample Chueca's famous nightlife will love the fact breakfast is served until 12pm. The real draw here, though, is the rooftop terrace, one of the city's prime vantage points. Be sure to catch the last rays of sundown here while lounging by the pool and slurping a cocktail.

■ **Rooms:** From €89 (£78) including free wi-fi and breakfast. *Plaza Vázquez de Mella 12, Madrid, 28004. T: 00 34 91 701 11 73. [www.room-matehotels.com](http://www.room-matehotels.com)*

### BEST FOR BUDGET TRAVELLERS: HOSTAL ORLY

The seemingly constant flow of people along the Calle Montera is perhaps not surprising, given it links the central Sol square with the traffic-packed Gran Vía. If you're after a cut-price base from where to explore this area of Madrid — which, it should be noted, is famed for its prostitution, but is far from dangerous — the Hostal Orly is a good choice. Located in a magnificent modernist building, it's simple, clean and very, very cheap.

■ **Rooms:** From €30 (£26) for a single room. *Calle de la Montera 47, Madrid, 28013. T: 00 34 91 531 30 12. [www.hostalorlymadrid.com](http://www.hostalorlymadrid.com) >>*

## SALAMANCA

THE MOST EXCLUSIVE of central Madrid's neighbourhoods, Salamanca is home to lawyers, ambassadors, high-flying businessmen and shops. Lots and lots of shops. Here's where you head when your credit card is burning a hole in your pocket, starting with Spanish favourite Loewe before moving on to Cartier, Gucci and Louis Vuitton. The neighbourhood has just been given a makeover, no doubt to keep in step with the people on the streets — all of whom, young and old, are always impeccably turned out. Few can afford to live here, but a hotel stay in the neighbourhood is more affordable!

### WE RECOMMEND

#### HOTEL ADLER

Hotel Adler is on the corner of Velázquez and Goya Streets — both synonymous with upscale Salamanca. Housed in a former palace, dating from 1884, the 44-room Adler's air of elegance is enhanced by its extensive art collection. Dine in the Restaurante Adler, for Spanish classics such as suckling pig and salt cod turned out to perfection by chef Luis Méndez. But it's the location that will really appeal to the well-heeled visitor, with some of the capital's finest stores, boutiques and restaurants a stone's throw away. Another bonus is the hotel's underground, three-story car park.

■ **Rooms:** Single room from €385 (£337). *Calle Velázquez 33.*

*T: 00 34 91 426 32 20. www.hoteladler.es*

■ **X-factor:** The marble floors and fittings in the bathrooms.

#### BEST FOR LONG LUNCHES

#### VINCCI SOMA

Watch the world go by at 170-room SoMa's first-floor restaurant, overlooking the exclusive Calle Goya. If your budget stretches to it, book a superior room, with terrace. If you're after self-catering, there are seven apartments.

■ **Rooms:** From €70 (£61) for a single room. *Calle Goya 79. T: 00 34 91 435 75 45. www.vinccihoteles.com*

#### BEST FOR SIGHTSEEING

#### HOSTAL SALAMANCA

Everything you could want to see in Salamanca is near the hostel of the same name, and at a price that will leave you plenty to spend in the neighbourhood's numerous shops and tapas bars.

■ **Rooms:** From €35 (£31) for a single room. *Calle José Ortega y Gasset 89. T: 00 34 91 402 40 46. www.hostalsalamanca.com* □

